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# ORY OF THE PASSION



A. DEVINE

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HISTORY  
OF  
THE PASSION.

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JOANNES S. VAUGHAN,  
*Censor Deputatus.*

**Imprimatur.**

HENRICUS EDUARDUS,  
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*Die 24 Junii, 1890*

# HISTORY OF THE PASSION:

BEING THE  
Gospel Narrative of the Sufferings of Christ  
AND THE  
Dolours of Mary,

WITH NOTES AND COMMENTS.

BY THE  
REV. ARTHUR DEVINE,  
*PASSIONIST.*



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## P R E F A C E.

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*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals (Apoc. v. 1).*

This book is the same as that which is mentioned by the Prophet Ezechiel: *And I looked, and behold a hand was sent to me, wherein was a book rolled up: and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without: and there were written in it lamentations, and canticles, and wo (Ezech. ii. 9).*

Amongst the many interpretations of this mysterious book given by commentators, I find one which refers it to our Lord's sacred Passion, that *book* which was opened and extended when Christ was nailed to the cross, and in which all Christian virtues can be read and studied.

*It was written within and without. Within*, in the sorrow and the sadness of Christ's soul—*without*, in the wounds of His sacred body. And this book was sealed with seven seals, which are thus enumerated and interpreted:—

1. The weakness of Him who was omnipotent.
2. The intense pain and suffering of Him who was impassible.
3. The foolishness before men of Him who was the Wisdom of the Father.
4. The greatest poverty in the God of riches, in Whom all treasures are to be found.
5. The lowest grade of ignominy in the highest Majesty.
6. The greatest dereliction joined to the greatest union with God.
7. The

greatest severity united to the most perfect love of a Father towards His Son.

It contained *lamentations, and canticles, and wo*. *Lamentations and wo*, in the history of His sufferings and death—*canticles*, in the hope and happiness of His resurrection after death.

This book, considered as that of the Passion and death of Christ, or that in which His Passion and death are written, contains the record of the greatness of the charity of Christ towards men.

It was formerly closed and sealed. This was the case before the Incarnation, and during the lifetime of our Saviour. It was opened in His Passion, when the omnipotent power and divinity that had remained concealed in the human form manifested itself in His death on the cross, at which moment the earth quaked, and the rocks were broken, and the veil of the temple was rent in two; when the centurion, and those who were with him, went down from Calvary, striking their breasts, and saying: *Indeed this man was the Son of God*.

When that *book* was opened, men were able to read the writing. It was written, as we are told, *within and without*. The writing inside was the Word of God, which was written on the humanity of Christ by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The outside writing recorded the injuries, the wounds, the shedding of the precious blood, and the ignominy of the cross, which His cruel persecutors had written in so many dark letters.

It is chiefly the outside writing of this *book* which forms the subject of this work—the narrative of the wounds, ignominies and sufferings endured by our divine Saviour



in His bitter Passion. These are considered not so much in the mystical and internal sense, as in their literal and historical meaning, and in my treatment of them the following method has been observed.

At the beginning of each chapter, I give in English the text of the Gospel narrative, according to the harmony of the four Evangelists. The comments and notes are then given to explain the meaning of the text, and the various circumstances in connection with the events of the Passion.

The first three chapters are devoted to the immediate antecedents of the Passion, namely, Christ foretelling His sufferings; the Last Supper, and the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament.

The subsequent chapters treat of the various events of the Passion in the order in which they happened. A special chapter is given on the Last Seven Words; another, on the Resurrection of Christ; together with a concluding chapter on the Seven Dolours of our Blessed Lady, in which each of her dolours is separately considered.

An Appendix is added, containing instructions on the erection and the manner of visiting the Stations, or the *Via Crucis*—that chief devotional exercise in honour of our Saviour's Passion and death.

The pious reflections and affections contained in so many useful books on the Passion already published, are not introduced into this work, but are left entirely to the disposition and devotion of the reader; my object being to bring before the mind as clearly and accurately as possible the subject matter for these reflections and affections, as supplied by the details of the history of the Passion.

The numerous works already published on the Passion are, for the most part, confined to the domain of piety, and on that account are most valuable and useful to devout souls ; but I believe it will be equally useful, for the purpose of piety and devotion, to study the Passion from a historical and exegetical point of view. Inasmuch as to *meditate* does not mean to *think of nothing*, the mind has to be supplied with knowledge derived from history and Scriptural exegesis, that it may be able to profit by the time spent in prayer, and this knowledge is the foundation on which the whole meditation rests.

It is, therefore, my earnest hope that this work may serve as a help to devout souls who are accustomed to the practice of daily meditation ; that to the faithful in general it may be the means of making the sufferings of our divine Redeemer more known and better understood ; and that, in the words of Mgr. Isoard, Bishop of Annecy, a complete history of our Saviour's Passion, well studied and explained, may prove a signal advantage and a great blessing in every Christian parish into which it may be introduced.

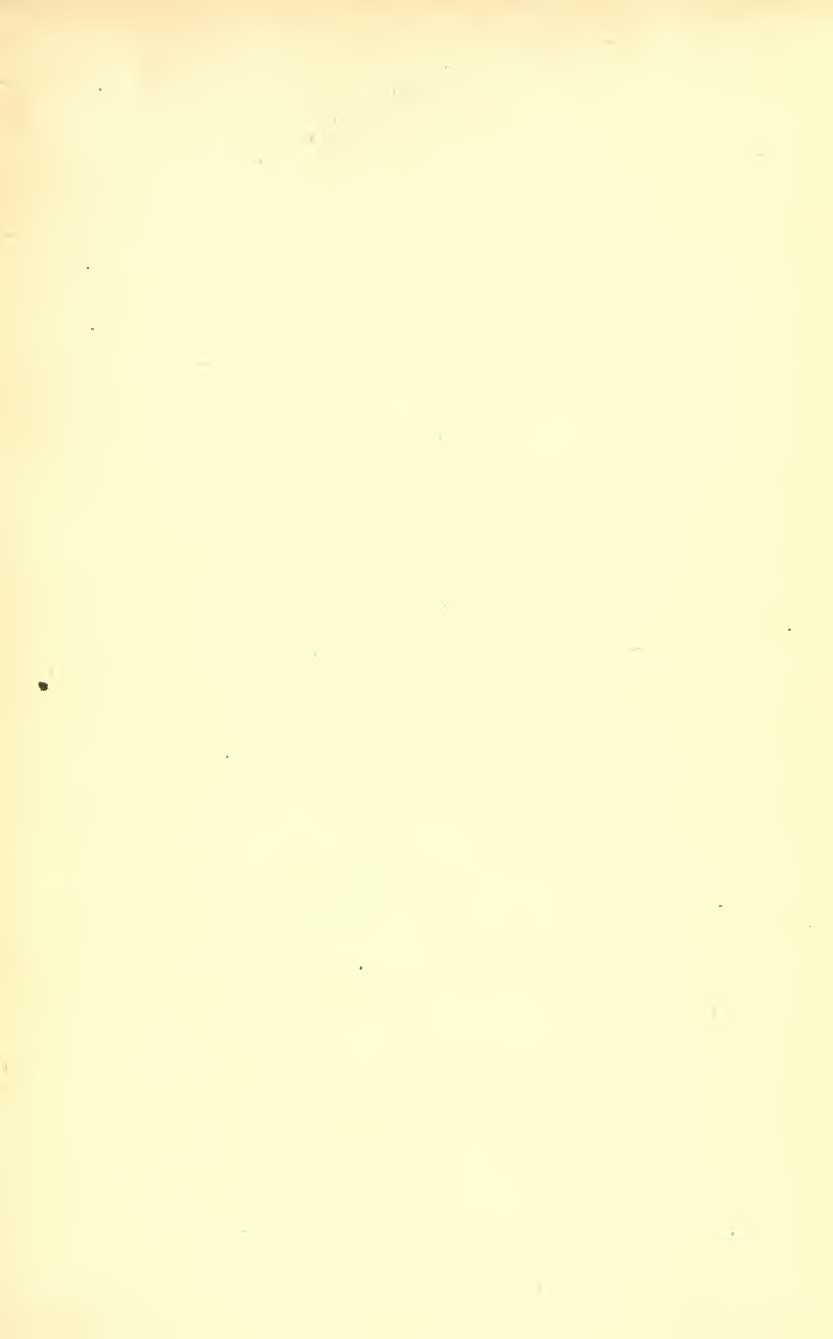
Since the time of Christ's death, this writing in the book of His Passion has been continually read, but not fully understood by all ; because he who regards the Passion of Christ by faith only, and not in work, is, in a spiritual sense, a child who understands not what he reads ; he who copies the Passion by suffering patiently and labouring earnestly in the faithful observance of the Christian precepts, reads this writing, and, understanding it, makes progress in virtue ; but he who perseveres to the end in carrying the cross of Christ, will understand perfectly the full meaning contained in our Saviour's Passion. In this,

according to St. Laurence Justinian, the Divine Wisdom collected the abbreviation of His law, the sacraments of salvation, the compendium of charity, the height of perfection, the standard of all virtues, and the whole economy of human redemption—all of which He included in this volume of His Passion; wherefore, when He had finished writing, and nothing more remained to be written, He said: *Consummatum est—it is consummated* (St. Laurence Just. de triumph. Chr. agon. C. 20).

ST. JOSEPH'S RETREAT,  
HIGHGATE,  
LONDON, N.,

*Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1890.*





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## NOTICE.

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1. In the Scripture narrative of the Passion, I have not thought it necessary to quote the chapters, as it is sufficiently well known that that narrative is contained in the 26th and 27th chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel; in the 14th and 15th of St. Mark's; in the 22nd and 23rd of St. Luke's, and in the 18th and 19th of St. John's. The other Scriptural texts are quoted by chapter and verse.

2. The text of the Gospels is according to the translation of the New Testament published by the English College at Rheims, as it is the text commonly used by the faithful, and approved by the bishops in England and Ireland. The letters indicating the text are to be understood: (Mt.) St. Matthew; (M.) St. Mark; (L.) St. Luke, and (J.) St. John.

3. The harmony of the Gospel narrative of the Passion is according to that given by the Rev. Fr. Seraphim, *a corde Jesu* (Passionist), in a work entitled, *Promptuarium Ecclesiasticum super Passione Jesu Christi*.

4. I think it necessary to state that the passages from the Fathers, in some instances, are intended rather to convey the meaning of the Father referred to, than his exact words. And some of the quotations are not taken from original sources, but from different trustworthy authors. I have endeavoured to give all the references as accurately as possible in the foot-notes throughout the work.

ST. JOSEPH'S RETREAT,

*Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1890.*

# HISTORY OF THE PASSION,

BEING THE

## GOSPEL NARRATIVE

OF THE

### SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### CHRIST FORETELLS HIS PASSION.

THE Passion of Christ was prefigured and foretold in many places and in many ways in the Holy Scriptures. Christ Himself more than once foretold His Passion, and it is to His own predictions that this Chapter is devoted.

The first time that He foretold His Passion was after He had retired into the parts of Cesarea Philippi, and is thus related by St. Matthew (xvi. 13, *et seq.*):—*And Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and He asked His disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist; and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, &c.*

*From that time Jesus began to shew to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the Ancients and Scribes and Chief-priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again. And Peter taking him, began to rebuke him, saying: Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee. Who, turning, said to Peter: Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me; because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men. Then Jesus said to his disciples: if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. . . . For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his Angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works.*

The second time that Christ foretold His Passion was after His transfiguration on the mount. Having descended from the mountain, and when they abode together in Galilee, He said to His disciples (St. Matthew, xvii. 21):—*The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, they shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again.*

Then, after raising Lazarus from the dead, St. John gives the account of what took place (xi. 47):—*The Chief-priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered, a Council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles. But one of them named Caiphas, being the High-priest that year, said to them: You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself, but being the High-priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation. From that day, therefore, they devised to put him to death.*

Jesus, therefore, knowing the evil intention of the Chief-priests and the Scribes, retired to the confines of Judea, to the town of Ephrem, and when the Pasch was drawing near, He went up to Jerusalem with His twelve Apostles, and predicted His Passion



a third time in the words of St. Luke (xviii. 31):—*Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered up to the gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged, and spit upon. And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things.*

On the Tuesday evening after Palm Sunday: *Jesus said to his disciples: You know that after three days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified* (St. Matthew, xxvi.). This was the fourth time that Christ predicted His Passion. Then, says St. Matthew (that is, on the Wednesday, the following day, in the morning), *were gathered together the Chief-priests and Ancients of the people into the court of the High-priest, who was called Caiphaz, And they consulted together that by subtilty they might apprehend Jesus and put him to death. But they said not on the festival day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people.*

Judas Iscariot, *one of the twelve*, was present at this Council meeting. And on the Saturday previous he was present in the house of Simon the leper, on the occasion when Magdalen poured the precious ointment on the head of Jesus, and when he resolved in his heart to betray and sell Christ to the Jews. St. Matthew continues:—*Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the Chief-priests, and said to them, what will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver. And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray him.*

According to the above narrative, we have four distinct prophecies made by our Lord concerning His Passion. The first, when in the parts of Cesarea Philippi, after he had confirmed the Apostles in their faith. The second, after His transfiguration. The third, about ten days before His death, when He was going up to Jerusalem with His twelve Apostles. The fourth, on the Tuesday after Palm Sunday, when He said to His disciples:—*You know*

*that after three days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified.*

The first of these prophecies was spoken after He had confirmed the Apostles in their faith in His divinity. It was in the third year of His public ministry and in the month of July, about nine months before His Passion. He had restored sight to the blind man at Bethsaida, and then went towards the north, to the parts of Cesarea Philippi. This was a town situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, first called Paneas; afterwards, because it was enlarged and improved by the tetrarch Philip, it was called Cesarea, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar, and the name of Philip was added to distinguish it from Cesarea of Palestine, which was built by Herod Ascalonita, the father of Philip, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and was called Cesarea after Cæsar Augustus. Christ then retired into the neighbourhood of this town, in order that He might teach the gentiles who frequented that place, as well as the Jews, and that He might more freely speak of the Messiah. If in Judea our Lord were to proclaim Himself as the Messiah, that is, the expected King of the Jews, he would have been accused of disloyalty to Cæsar, as was the case afterwards when He was accused before Pilate: *We have found this man saying that he was Christ the King.\** Not far, therefore, from the walls of Cesarea Philippi, recently erected on the declivity of Mount Libanus, at the source of the Jordan, within the confines of the Land of Chanaan, in the neighbourhood of the gentile nations, our Blessed Lord, accompanied by His disciples, made known His Passion, after He had first spent some time in prayer, according to the testimony of St. Luke:—*As he was alone praying, his disciples were with him.†* There and then it was that He interrogated them, and having made the promise of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to St. Peter, and confirmed the other Apostles in their faith, He predicts His Passion to them for the first time.‡

\* Luke xxiii. 2.

† Luke ix. 18.

‡ Schouppe, Evangelia in Festo SS. Petri & Pauli.

The terms of this prediction are clear and definite. St. John announced our Saviour's death under the figure of a lamb and of a victim; our Saviour had on former occasions announced His Passion, but under the figures of Jonas, of the Temple, of the brazen Serpent raised up by Moses; but in this place He speaks to His friends without parable or figure, and in language that cannot be misunderstood. He tells them of His future sufferings, and the nature of those sufferings. He began to show His disciples *that he must go to Jerusalem, and that he should suffer many things from the Ancients and Scribes and Chief-priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again.*

Let us take each of these expressions—*He must go to Jerusalem*, that is, of necessity; *quia oportebat eum*: is the Latin Vulgate expression.

God, His Father, had ordained it so, and it was the ordination of Divine Wisdom which reconciled and united the rights of Supreme justice with the graces and favours of the most tender mercy. According to the Divine decree, it was now necessary that Christ should redeem us by the death of the Cross. It was necessary, on the part of the will of God, although under the precept Christ retained the perfect freedom of His will. It was necessary, in order to satisfy to the full the Divine justice, and in order to effect the redemption of the human race.

Here, then, is the reference made to Jerusalem:—*He must go to Jerusalem.* He was born in the small village of Bethlehem; He passed the greater part of His life at Nazareth, a village still more obscure; He wrought His chief miracles in and around Galilee, but His death must be in the Capital City, that thus the glory of His triumph may be made known, and that the facts and circumstances of His death and resurrection may be made so manifest to the world, that posterity cannot refuse to receive them, or ever be able to contest their truth.

*He must suffer many things from the Ancients*, that is, the Sena-

tors, the members of the Council; *the Scribes*, that is, the doctors of the Law; and the *Chief-priests*, that is, the heads of the priestly families and those who are mentioned by name in the history of the Passion—namely, Annas and Caiphas.

He then mentions two other events: (1) *He will be put to death.* (2.) *He will rise again on the third day.* His death will be the last triumph of human power over him. His enemies will triumph for a moment in His death, but this will not be for long. Were His power only human, their victory would be complete. For this reason he would encourage His Apostles by again reminding them of His divinity, by telling them that He would triumph over death by His resurrection on the third day.

In this prophecy we are reminded of three great mysteries. The Divinity of Christ, His Death, and His Resurrection. And by participation in them we can refer to the three great mysteries of a Christian—Baptism, which renders him a child of God by grace; Death, which renders him an object of contempt to the world; and Resurrection, which is his hope, and which will introduce him to his future inheritance.

The second prophecy of Christ regarding His Passion was after His transfiguration on Mount Thabor. This event took place probably on the 6th of August, in the third year of His preaching. Thabor is a mountain in Galilee, between Nazareth and Tiberiades; and it was when Christ abode in Galilee with His disciples that he revealed once more His Passion.

The terms of this second prediction are the same as those used on a former occasion. In it He foretells three things:—(1.) That the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. (2.) That they will put Him to death. (3.) That He will rise from the dead on the third day.

This revelation was made to them after He had manifested His divine power and glory in the transfiguration, and at a time when they were all filled with admiration, and praised God on account

of the wondrous works which they were every day witnessing. It was also immediately after He had worked a miracle, by curing one possessed by the evil spirit.

The revelation of His Passion at such a time made a deep impression on His Apostles. They were, according to the Evangelist, exceedingly troubled. Their ignorance and frailty must call forth our compassion.

They knew now that Christ was the Son of God. They recognised Him as their King and as the promised Messiah; and yet they were ignorant of the nature of that Kingdom and the manner in which it was to be established. They were, therefore, perplexed and troubled at hearing this prophecy.

The third time he predicted His Passion was after the resurrection of Lazarus and the meeting of the Council of the Jews, when it was decided that He should be put to death.

As stated in the narrative, Jesus knowing the evil intentions of the Chief priests and Scribes, retired to the confines of Judea, to the town of Ephrem, where He remained until within ten days of His death. He had already twice spoken to His Apostles of His death—once in the month of July, in the third year of His preaching, and again in the month of August following; and now, within ten days of his death, when going up to Jerusalem for the last time, He spoke to His Apostles once more on this subject, beginning with the words:—*Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man.* St. Mark tells us that *they were on their way up to Jerusalem; and Jesus preceded them; and they were astonished; and they following him were afraid.* By which is shown the alacrity and willingness of Christ in going to death, and the admiration and fears of His Apostles.

As Jesus was making the journey in this manner, He waited until the twelve Apostles came up to Him, and then taking them apart, each one separately it would appear, he told them of His sufferings and death.



The details of this prophecy are substantially the same as on former occasions, but He enters more minutely into the particulars of His Passion. He says in the Gospel of St. Mark, that He will be delivered up to the *Chief-priests* and *Scribes* and *Ancients*. These were the persons who composed the Supreme Council of the Jews, the Sanhedrim. This Council of the Jews, as described by a recent author,\* was composed of 71 persons. It consisted of three courts or houses, the Sopherim, or Teachers of the Law ; the College of the High-priests, and the house of the Elders. The president, or head of the Council, bore the title of Nasi, and was not necessarily the High-priest. In Numbers, xi. 16, we read, that God commanded Moses to call together 70 of the Elders, and to put his spirit upon them.

The first, or Upper House, was the House of the Lawyers, and it had originally supreme power of life and death. But when the Romans conquered Palestine, and converted Judea into a Roman Province, their power was taken from them, and all those cases which had been tried in the Court of the Lawyers were heard by the Roman Prætor.

This House, accordingly, practically dissolved. It had nothing to do, the Sceptre was taken from it, and its lawgiver was divested of all power.

The second House was that of the Chief priests. At the head of it sat the High-priest, and it was made up of the heads of the twenty-four priestly families, and of the heads of the department connected with the ministry of the Temple. The members all bore the title of "Chief-priests" (*ἀρχιερεῖς*). They decided in all spiritual matters as to faith and heresy. This House remained in full activity after the abrogation of the first, and thus the High-priest became the virtual head of the Jewish Council.

The third House was that of the Elders (Ancients), and was made up of the representatives of the great Jewish families and

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\* Baring Gould.



Rabbis of note. They went by the name of the Elders (Ancients), and continued to sit with the second House. From this we can understand what is meant by "the Chief-priests and the Elders (Ancients)."

I shall have occasion to refer again to this Council and its meetings in the subsequent history of the Passion at the trials of Christ.

The text goes on to say:—*And they will deliver him to the gentiles*, that is, to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, and his soldiers. He uses an antithesis here, as it were between the Jews and gentiles, as if He had said, "It is not enough that he be delivered up to the Jews, his friends and his own people, but he must be handed over to the persecution of his enemies, the gentiles, that he may be more cruelly tortured and finally crucified."

*And the third day he will rise.* Whenever our Lord predicted His Passion, He also told them of His resurrection, so that His disciples might know that death was not the end of His life or of His work upon earth, but rather the beginning of His glory and of His Kingdom. It is asked why Christ, at this time, when going up to Jerusalem, foretold His Passion? St. John Chrysostom tells the reason, namely, to strengthen beforehand the patience and constancy of His Apostles, that, being forewarned, the blow might not be so severely felt, and that they might be fully prepared for it. Our Lord's words, therefore, in this and in many other places, were uttered in order to their future effect, for at the time He spoke them they were not even understood by His hearers:—*And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said.*

The fourth prediction was on the Tuesday after Palm Sunday, when He said to His disciples:—*You know that after three days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified . . .* This was after the Council meeting, when they consulted together *that by subtilty they might apprehend Jesus, at*

which Judas was present and made them the offer : *What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you?*

This prophecy, considered in regard to our Saviour, manifests His tranquillity of soul when announcing His death. He had been all that Tuesday occupied in replying to His enemies, in teaching the people, and instructing His disciples. The union of the Pasch with His Passion has its significance. He would have us understand that He is the true Pasch. The immolation of the Paschal lamb was only a figure of His Sacrifice, and the eating of the Paschal lamb was only a figure of that heavenly banquet in which He gives us His Body and Blood to be the food of our souls.

On the part of the Apostles, this prediction of His immediate Passion was heard without attention. They were accustomed to hear Him speak of His death, and, at the same time, of His Kingdom and power, and they did not comprehend matters as they really were. They cherished their hopes of His Kingdom and power, and were not uneasy about His sufferings and death. But, after they had seen these, then they understood the mystery of His Passion, and the words which Jesus had so often spoken to them.

As regards Judas, the prediction saying, *The Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified*, caused him no remorse. Judas had not perhaps as yet determined to put his crime of treason into execution, and the words of our Lord were probably intended to make him enter into himself and repent of his evil dispositions. But no ; his heart was already hardened. It is often the case, when one is about to commit a crime, that the thought of it inspires the greatest horror ; but now, on the occasion of the feast of the Pasch, the greatest of the solemnities of the Old Dispensation, the treason of Judas, the perfidy of the Jews, and the execution of Jesus, are determined upon and carried out.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE LAST SUPPER.

ON the Thursday after Palm Sunday, Christ sent Peter and John before the other Apostles into the city, that they might make the necessary preparations for the Supper of the Paschal lamb.

It was the first day of the Azymes, and He said to them :—(Mt.) *Go ye into the city to a certain man, and say to him : The master saith, my time is near at hand ; with thee I make the Pasch with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them, and they prepared the Pasch.*

Christ, with the ten others, follows the two disciples, and when He had come to the place where the Pasch was prepared, *He sat down with his twelve disciples.* And on beginning what was called the Legal Supper of the Paschal lamb, Christ said to His Apostles :—(L.) *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.* And whilst they were eating, Jesus said to them :—(Mt.) *Amen, I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me. And they, being very much troubled, began every one to say : Is it I, Lord ? But he answering, said : He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him ; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed ; it were better for him if that man had not been born. And Judas that betrayed him, answering, said : Is it I, Rabbi ? He saith to him : Thou hast said it.* The Apostles did not attend to these words addressed directly to Judas.

When the Legal or ceremonial Supper was finished and the usual supper had commenced, which, in large families and at assemblies, where several persons formed the company, was partaken of after the Legal Supper, Christ rose from the table, as related by St. John :—*And when supper was done, he riseth from supper and layeth aside his garments, and having taken a towel, girded himself. After*

*that he putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. He cometh, therefore, to Simon Peter. And Peter saith to him: Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered, and said to him: What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to him: Thou shalt never wash my feet; Jesus answered him: If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me. Simon Peter saith to him: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him: He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly, and you are clean, but not all. This was the second reference made by our Saviour, at the Last Supper, to the traitor Judas. After the washing of the Apostles, amongst whom was Judas, Christ resumed His garments, and, reseating Himself, said to them:—(J.) Know you what I have done to you? . . . If I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also. . . . The servant is not greater than his master, &c.*

In his discourse, Christ speaks a third time of the traitor Judas, saying:—*He that eateth bread with me, shall lift up his heel against me. . . . When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit; and he testified and said: Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you shall betray me. The disciples, therefore, looked upon one another, doubting of whom he spoke.*

*Now, there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter, therefore, beckoned, and said to him: Who is it of whom he speaketh? He, therefore, leaning on the breast of Jesus, saith to him: Lord, who is it? Jesus answered: He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the morsel, Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him: That which thou dost, do quickly.*

The Apostles did not understand the meaning of these words;

*For some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus said to him: buy those things which we have need of for the festival day; or that he should give something to the poor.*

After Judas had taken the morsel, St. John says that *he went out immediately*. This, according to Baronius, is not to be understood as if he took his departure precipitately, but only that he went out on the first opportunity, so as not to give occasion to the others of surprise or suspicion.

Judas, therefore, remained with the others for some time. And it is the more probable opinion that he was present when Jesus instituted the Blessed Sacrament, and that he received it. St. John further tells us that *it was night* when Judas left the supper-room.

*The Feast of the Pasch or Passover.*—This was one of the eight solemn feasts of the Jews, and it was of Divine institution. It was instituted to commemorate the liberation of the Jewish people from the bondage of Egypt. To it was annexed the solemnity of the Azymes, or unleavened bread, which began the next day, in memory of their actual going forth from Egypt.

Our Saviour, on the night before He died, celebrated the Pasch with His Apostles. Some explanation is needed to determine the day on which the Pasch fell this year of our Saviour's death; and also, in order to reconcile some text of the sacred Scriptures, we have to understand how the Jews computed their ecclesiastical day, and at what time it commenced.

We commence our day at midnight; others commence the day at sunrise, but the Jews commenced their day at sunset, or in the evening. This they did not only in the ecclesiastical, but also in the civil order of things, imitating in this manner of computation the order of creation: *And there was evening and morning one day.*

The entire day is composed of two great parts; the night, or darkness, and the natural day, or light. The night commences with the evening, as the day commences with the morning. Thus,



the evening, with the night of which it was the commencement, and the morning, with the day of which it was the commencement, made with the Hebrews their entire day : *There was evening and morning one day*. Although the Jews computed the day in this manner, they used our manner of speaking of the next day. Thus, on a Thursday evening, although the Friday had commenced, they spoke of it as the following day, or the next day. St. John uses this manner of speaking in regard to the Pasch which our Saviour celebrated on the Thursday evening at the first Vespers of the Friday, when he says, *ante diem festum*, although the feast day had already commenced.

We therefore learn that the day of the Pasch, the day on which Christ died, fell on a Friday ; that He died at the second Vespers of the Paschal day on the Friday ; and that He celebrated the Pasch and instituted the Holy Eucharist at the first Vespers of that same day ; or, in our way of expressing it, on the Thursday evening, the vigil of His death and the vigil of the Paschal day (“ L’Evangile Medité,” par M. Romain, Med. 279, note).

The Pasch or Passover (*i.e., transitus*) was so called, because the Angel of the Lord passed over the houses of the Hebrews, whose doorposts were sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal lamb, whilst the Egyptian houses were entered and the children slain. It was instituted on the evening before the Israelites, led by Moses, set out from Egypt, and was celebrated afterwards in memory of this event : *And this day shall be for a memorial to you ; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord in your generations with an everlasting observance.\**

There is frequent mention made in Holy Scripture of its celebration. 1st. In Egypt, the evening before the Israelites took their departure out of that land, which was on the 14th day of the month Nisan (our March) (Exod. xii. 6). 2nd. In the desert of Sinai, the second year after their going out of Egypt (Numb. ix. 1). 3rd. After

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\* Exod. xii. 14.

passing the Jordan on the plains of Jericho (Jos. v. 10). 4th. In Jerusalem, under King Josias (4 Kings, xxiii. 21). 5th. Under Ezechias (2 Par. xxx. 1). 6th. Under Esdras, after the captivity of Babylon, in the sixth year of Darius.

According to the Gospel narrative, we find our Saviour at three celebrations of the Pasch. Many of the Fathers of the Church hold that He celebrated the Pasch regularly even from His childhood, and they use in proof of this the text of St. Luke (ii. 41), where it is said : *And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch.* There is, however, express mention of three times when our Saviour was present at this feast. First, in St. John (ii. 13) : *And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, &c.* This was probably in the 31st year of His age. Second, in St. John (vii. 10) : *Then (in His 32nd year) he also went up to the feast.* Third, in St. Matthew (xxvi. 18), in the 33rd year of His age, on which occasion He sent His disciples to prepare the Pasch. Some conclude a fourth Pasch from St. John (v. 1, or vi. 4), when He fed the 5,000 by the miraculous multiplication of bread.

The Pasch of the Jews was a figure and representation of our Pasch, and the following points of similarity are noted between them :—

1. Our Pasch, like theirs, is celebrated once a year, and only by Christians, as theirs was celebrated only by the Jews.

2. By our Pasch we are reminded of our liberation from the servitude of sin, as the Jewish Pasch was a memorial of their liberation from the servitude of Egypt.

3. By our Pasch, Christ, innocent, without stain or sin, is offered towards the end of ages to His heavenly Father ; by the Jewish Pasch, the lamb, without stain or spot, was offered to God towards the end or close of the day.

4. In our Pasch, Christ is received after Christians have cleansed their souls from all sin in the tribunal of penance ; in the Jewish

Pasch, the lamb and unleavened bread were eaten after the Jews had cleansed themselves by the legal purifications.

5. In our Pasch, Christ is received whole and entire, that is, His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity; in the Jewish Pasch, the Paschal lamb was entirely consumed.

*The Paschal Lamb.*—This was the victim to be offered on the feast of the Pasch, on the evening above mentioned. As to the rite by which the Paschal lamb was offered, nothing certain is known from the Scripture except as regards the first time it was offered, when the rite is described in Exodus (xii. 10) as follows :—

1. The lamb shall be sacrificed, and his blood put on the posts and upper doorposts of the house wherein they shall eat.
2. And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire.
3. They shall eat the head with the feet and entrails thereof.
4. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and wild lettuce.
5. It shall not be lawful to preserve any of it; but if any be left it shall be consumed by fire.

6. *And thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your reins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands, and you shall eat in haste; for it is the Phase (that is, the Passage) of the Lord.*

Whether all those things were observed afterwards is uncertain; and it is also uncertain whether the Jews used to eat the Paschal lamb sitting or standing.

Only Jews were allowed to eat the Paschal lamb; and no strangers, except they were first circumcised (Exod. xii. 48). The reason assigned for this is, that as circumcision was a figure of baptism, so was the immolation of the Paschal lamb a figure of the Holy Eucharist, in which no one can participate unless previously baptized; and as the sinful are not to be permitted to communicate, so the unclean amongst the Jews were not allowed to eat the Paschal lamb.

The Paschal lamb was offered for a two-fold end. First, in



memory of the benefit of the liberation out of Egypt, on the night when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain throughout the land, and the Hebrew children saved through the blood of the lamb.

Secondly, as a figure of Christ immolated for the salvation of mankind, according to the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 7), *Christ, our Pasch, is immolated*. Which figure is evident in its signification ; for, as by the immolation and aspersion of the blood of the lamb the Hebrews were liberated from the bondage of Pharaoh, and the slavery of Egypt, and the first-born saved from the destroying Angel ; so we, by the immolation of Christ, and the aspersion of His Blood on the Cross, are saved from the bondage and slavery of Satan and the death of sin. Likewise, as the eating of the Paschal lamb was a special rite, in a special place, at a special time, and with a special intention, so it is in regard to the celebration and reception of the Holy Eucharist (*A. Lapide*).

*The Solemnity of Azymes, or Unleavened Bread.*—This was a solemnity kept for seven days, during which it was not lawful to eat bread other than unleavened. *Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread* (Exod. xxxiv. 18). This law was given by God to Moses in memory of the going out of Egypt:—*Thou shalt keep the feast of the unleavened bread . . . as I commanded thee in the time of the new corn ; for in the month of the spring time thou camest out from Egypt* (Exod. xxxiv. 18). Further particulars of this celebration are also given :—*The first month, the fourteenth day of the month at evening, is the Phase of the Lord . . . until the one and twentieth day of the same month in the evening. Seven days there shall not be found any leaven in your houses ; he that shall eat leavened bread, his soul shall perish out of the assembly of Israel* (Exod. xii. 18 and 19). *And the fifteenth day of the same month is the solemnity of the unleavened bread of the Lord. . . . The first day shall be most solemn unto you. But you shall offer sacrifice in fire to the Lord seven days. And the seventh day shall be more solemn and more holy* (Lev. xxiii. 6-8).

The first act of the Paschal night was the putting away of all leaven. Leaven is used in the Gospel as a symbol of evil, but not always. St. Paul says :—*Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed for us ; therefore, let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* And again :—*Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as ye are unleavened.*

The celebration was a figure and commemoration of the Passion ; and also to signify that in the feast all that was evil and corrupt should be purged out of the heart. Our Lord also, on one occasion, speaks of His Kingdom as leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, to signify that the Gospel is thus put into the world, like leaven, so that in time it may influence and fill every place in the whole world.

*The Mandatum, or Washing of the Feet.*—Before speaking of this observance, Benedict XIV. refers to the manner of sitting at table amongst the Jews.

The Hebrews anciently sat at table as we do ; but afterwards they imitated the Persians and Chaldeans, who reclined on table-beds while eating.

Calmet gives a description of the common eating-table. He tells us :—1. That three tables are set together, so as to form but one. 2. Around these tables were placed, not seats, but *couches* or *beds*, one to each table, each of these beds being called *clinium* ; three of these, united to surround the three tables, formed the *triclinium* (three beds). These beds were formed of mattresses stuffed, and were often highly ornamented. 3. As to the attitude of the guests, each reclined on his left elbow, and used principally his right hand, that only, or at least chiefly, being free for use. The feet of the person reclining were towards the external edge of the bed, and much more readily reached by anybody passing than any other part of the person so reclining.

From this description we may the better understand some passages of the Gospel, as, for example, St. Luke, vii. 37: *And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. And standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet, with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*

The same applies to the text of St. John, xii. 2 and 3, where it is said that Lazarus was one of them who were or reclined at table with Jesus when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus. It also appears how justly John might be said *to be leaning on Jesus' bosom* at the supper-table.

Assisted, as Calmet says, by these ideas, we may better understand the history of our Lord's washing His disciples' feet. *He poureth water into a basin*, and, going round the beds whereon the disciples reclined, *He began to wash their feet*, which were laid on the external edge of the couch, *and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded, &c.*

As to the washing itself; after meals it was customary to wash the hands, because from the usual manner of eating, the fingers were sure to be soiled, but in this there was nothing religious. Neither was there anything religious in the Eastern or Hebrew custom of washing the feet. The Orientals used to wash the feet of strangers who came after a journey, because they commonly walked barefoot, wearing only sandals. This office was commonly performed by servants and slaves. In a moral sense, to wash the feet signifies to purify from earthly and carnal affections.

Our Saviour, at His Last Supper, gave His last lesson of humility by washing His disciples' feet, thus raising this customary kind of washing into a symbolical action, signifying the cleansing of the soul from the stains of sin.

We may, therefore, arrange the order of events at the Last Supper in the following manner:—There was a three-fold supper.

1st. The Legal Supper, when the Paschal lamb was eaten and all its ceremonies observed. 2nd. The usual, or common supper, taken after the Paschal lamb in large families; and 3rd, on this occasion, the Sacred Supper, when the Holy Eucharist was instituted. The more common and probable opinion is that which Suarez holds concerning the time of the washing of the feet, namely, that it was after the first or Legal Supper, and thus we may interpret the words of St. John, *cæna facta, the supper being ended*, or when supper was over; after the first supper, and a little before the second. By the first, the precept of the law was fulfilled. Then Jesus washed His disciples' feet before the institution of the Holy Eucharist, to signify the purity of conscience with which we should approach this Holy Sacrament.

As an appropriate conclusion to this chapter, the following stanzas from a hymn of the Greek Liturgy may be given, as they allude to the mysteries explained in it:—

*Hymn—"In Parasceve."*

"On this day Judas leaves his Master, and takes the devil for guide. The love of money blinds him. He fell from light and became darkened; for how could he be said to see, who sold the Light for thirty pieces of silver? But to us He has risen, He that suffered for the world; let us thus cry out unto Him: Glory be to Thee, that didst endure Thy Passion, and hadst compassion for mankind!

"What was it, O Judas! that led thee to betray Jesus? Had He cut thee off from the number of His Apostles? Had He deprived thee of the gift of healing the sick? When He supped with the Apostles, did He drive thee from the table? When He washed their feet, did He pass thee by? And yet thou wast unmindful of these great favours! Thy ungrateful plot has branded thee with infamy; but His incomparable patience and great mercy are worthy of praise.

"Say, O ye unjust ones! what is it ye have heard from our

Saviour? Did He not expound unto you the Law and the Prophets? Why, therefore, have ye plotted how to deliver up to Pilate the Word that is from God and that came to redeem our souls?

“They that had enjoyed Thy unceasing gifts cried out: Let Him be crucified! These murderers of such as were innocent sought Thee, that they might treat Thee, their benefactor, as an evil doer. But Thou, O Christ! didst bear this wickedness with silence, for Thou, being the lover of mankind, didst desire to suffer for and save us. We are prevented from speaking by the multitude of our sins; do thou, O Virgin Mother of God! pray for us to Him that was born of thee, for the Mother’s prayer avails much with the mercy of our Lord. Despise not, O most pure Virgin! the prayers of sinners, for He that refused not even to suffer for us, is merciful, and is able to save us.”\*

I subjoin the following beautiful preface from the Ambrosian Missal; it expresses, in a most touching manner, the sentiments which a Christian should have on the vigil of our Lord’s Supper:—

“It is meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should ever, here and in all places, give thanks to Thee, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, through Christ our Lord, who, being innocent, willed to suffer for sinners, and be unjustly condemned for the guilty. His death wiped away our sins, and His resurrection opened for us the gates of heaven. Through Him we beseech Thy clemency, that to-day Thou cleanse us from our sins, and to-morrow feed us on the banquet of the Sacramental Supper; that to-day Thou receive the confession of our faults, and to-morrow grant us the increase of spiritual gifts; that to-day Thou receive the offering of our fasts, but to-morrow introduce us to the feast of the most holy Supper. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.”

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\* Translation taken from the “Liturgical Year,” Holy Week.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

DURING the supper which followed the Legal Supper, Christ instituted the Eucharist. St. Matthew says:—*Whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: this is my body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins.*

It is probable that Judas was present with the other Apostles when Christ, on instituting the Eucharist, said to them: *Take ye and eat. Drink ye all of this*—and he therefore communicated with the others.

After the institution and the reception of the Eucharist, as St. Luke (xxii. 21) implies, Christ complains a fourth time of the traitor, saying: *But yet behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.*

The Apostles, hearing these words, began again to ask who it was amongst them that would betray our Lord, and then Judas took occasion to go out of the supper room, almost unseen and unnoticed.

After the departure of Judas, Christ addressed to His eleven Apostles the discourse which begins with the words:—(J.) *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.*

At the end of the discourse, in which He taught His disciples many things, Christ offered up a prayer to His Father for His disciples, and for all those who would believe in Him, saying:—(J.) *Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee.*

After this:—(Mt.) *A hymn being said, they went out into Mount Olivet. Then Jesus said to them (on the way): All you shall be*



*scandalized in me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed. . . . And Peter, answering, said to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, that in this night before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. . . .*

(Mt.) *Then Jesus came with them into a country place which is called Gethsemani.*

*The Words of Consecration, or the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament.*—After our Saviour's explicit and clear expressions, it follows that all are obliged to believe in the reality of His flesh and blood, as contained in the Holy Eucharist.

Cardinal Wiseman thus expresses the Catholic belief in this mystery:—"We believe that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are truly and really present in the adorable Eucharist, because, taking bread and wine, He who is omnipotent said: *This is my body; this is my blood.* Here is our argument, and what can we advance to prove a strict accordance between our doctrine and that of our Saviour stronger and clearer, than the bare enunciation of our dogma beside that which He used in delivering it. *This is my body*, says our Lord. *I believe it to be thy body*, replies the Catholic. *This is my blood*, repeats our Redeemer. *I believe it to be the figure of thy blood*, rejoins the Protestant.

"Whose speech is here, yea, yea? Who saith *Amen* to the teaching of Christ? Is it Catholic or Protestant? You must plainly see that we have nothing more or better to say for ourselves than what Christ has already said; and that our best argument consists in the bare repetition of His sacred and infallible words."

I do not use this extract in any controversial sense, except in so far as it goes to show the dogma of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and the motive of our belief in the dogma.

In treating of this subject it is well to keep in mind the circumstances in which the words were spoken by Christ.

1. It was when He was alone on the eve of His Passion with His chosen twelve, and is here pouring out the treasures of His love.

2. When He was making His last will and testament, an occasion when all men speak as simply and as intelligibly as possible.

3. When He was telling His dear friends and brethren that the time is come when He would speak plain and without parable to them.

“These reflections,” says Cardinal Wiseman, “ought greatly to strengthen our preference on this occasion of the plain, intelligible and natural signification of His words when instituting the great Sacrament of His religion.”\*

St. Mark says :—*And whilst they were yet eating, Jesus took bread, and blessing, broke and gave them, and said: Take ye, this is my body. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave it to them. And they all drank of it. And he said to them: This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many.*

St. Luke gives the following account :—*And taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the New Testament, in my blood, which shall be shed for you.*

St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 23 and 35, says :—*The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat; this is my body, which shall be delivered for you; this do in commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the New Testament, in my blood; this do ye as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me.*

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\* Lecture 5th on the Holy Eucharist.



Cardinal Wiseman says, in reference to the above words of institution :—"The history of this institution is given by the three first Evangelists, and by St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. The differences in their narrations are so slight, that a very few remarks will suffice to note them. . . . The two first Evangelists agree not only in substance, but almost in every word. The only difference consists in St. Mark's insertion of the parenthetical phrase in the 23rd verse: *And they all drank of it*; and his using a participial form (in Latin) in the narrative. On the other hand, St. Luke and St. Paul agree in a no less remarkable manner, in some slight variations from the other two. First, they both mention the circumstance of the institution being after supper; the reason of which seems to be clearly to distinguish the Sacramental cup from the legal one, which Christ divided among his Apostles (Luke v. 17), of which, He said, He would no more drink. Secondly, both add to the words of consecration of the bread an important clause: St. Luke having, *This is my body, which is given for you*; and St. Paul adding, *which is broken for you*. Thirdly, both agree in subjoining a clause commanding the commemorative repetition of the rite. St. Paul alone repeats this clause after both forms of consecration. Fourthly, they both give the words of institution for the cup in the peculiar form: *This chalice is the New Testament, in my blood*."

It is manifest that these variations do not affect the substance of the narrative. Two of the writers give additional circumstances, and thus complete the history. But it is no less manifest that the expressions recorded by the two clauses in relating the consecration of the cup, must be considered quite synonymous, so that *This cup is the new Covenant, in my blood*, is equivalent to *This is my blood*.

To sum up briefly all that was done by our Lord in the institution of the Eucharist, the following questions are proposed and answered by Benedict XIV.\* :—

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\* De Feria V. in Coena Domini.

1. Did Christ consecrate in leavened or unleavened bread ?
2. In the consecration did Christ make use of any form of words ?
3. Did He communicate Himself ?
4. Did He give the Holy Communion to Judas ?
5. What else took place on this occasion ?

To the first of these questions the same author answers :—

Christ consecrated in unleavened bread.

Whether the bread be leavened or unleavened, the consecration is valid, provided it is wheaten bread. And the Council of Florence\* expressly defined that the Greeks should consecrate leavened bread, and the Latins unleavened bread, according to the customs in the East and in the West. It is not necessary to go into the origin of these customs ; it suffices here to state that it is so even to this day. Both practices are approved by the Church, but it would not be lawful for a Greek priest to consecrate in unleavened bread, nor for a Latin priest to consecrate in leavened bread.

If we consider the symbolical meaning in reference to this question, it is explained that in the unleavened bread is signified the sincerity and purity of the flesh of Christ ; and in the fermented is signified the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ.

To the second question the answer is : All theologians agree that Christ consecrated bread and wine, but they are not agreed as to the manner of this consecration. Some, with Innocent III., have thought that Christ consecrated by an interior act and secret blessing, by the power of His excellence, without any necessity for words ; but that afterwards He proposed and prescribed a form of words of consecration which should always be used by His priests. The Pontiff in this only expresses his opinion as a theologian, and does not define or decree anything in the matter. We need not, therefore, depart from the commonly received

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\* A.D. 1439.

opinion, as stated by St. Thomas, namely, that Christ used an external benediction or blessing, and the same form of words which priests now use in consecrating the Holy Eucharist.

This is implied in the words of the Council of Trent,\* when it says that the institution of the Blessed Eucharist was made by Christ: "When after the blessing of the bread and wine He testified, in clear and distinct words, that He gave them His body and blood," which words sufficiently show that He did not consecrate by His blessing, but by the words, *This is my body; this is my blood*, as narrated by the Evangelists and by St. Paul.

To the third question the answer given is, that Christ at the Last Supper did receive His own body and blood. This is the opinion of St. Thomas, St. Jerome; and, according to Vasquez, it is the common opinion of theologians. For, as before the promulgation of the law of baptism, Christ wished to be baptized, so in like manner, at the institution of the Eucharist, He wished to receive His body and blood before distributing it to the disciples. According to that text of the Acts, i. 8, *Jesus began to do and to teach*.

The fourth question has been already answered, to the effect that Judas did receive the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, and he is the first example of an unworthy communicant. He made a sacrilegious Communion, and immediately afterwards betrayed his Divine Master with a kiss. Our Saviour instituted the Eucharist after the washing of the feet, at which Judas was present. And after the distribution of the Eucharist, our Lord again said that one of them would betray Him. Hence, in the hymn of the Church, of the heavenly bread, it is said: *Turbæ patrum duodenæ; datum non ambigitur*. If, then, it was given to the twelve, Judas must have been one of them.

In answer to the fifth question, it is said that after the supper was over, and Judas had gone out, our Saviour addressed to His disciples a most pleasing and admirable discourse, which St. John,

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\* Sess. 12, Ch. 1

who was a most attentive listener, narrates fully and exactly ; and a hymn being sung, Christ, with his Apostles, went towards the Mount of Olives. It is probable that the hymn sung on the occasion was the psalm, *In exitu Israel*, as the Jews were accustomed to sing this psalm at the Paschal Supper.

Christ instituted the Eucharist a sacrament when He took the unleavened bread, raised His eyes to heaven, blessed, broke and distributed it to the disciples, saying to them : *Take ye and eat ; this is my body*. But as this sacred mystery is not only the most holy of sacraments, but, moreover a true sacrifice, and as a sacrifice requires the shedding of blood, Jesus takes the cup, and, changing the wine into His own blood, He passes it round to His disciples, saying to them : *Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins*. The author of the "Liturgical Year" goes on to tell us : "The Apostles drink from the chalice proffered them ; when it came to Judas, he too partakes of it, but he drinks his own damnation, as he ate his own judgment when he received the Bread of Life."\*

There is one other circumstance of the deepest interest to us and to all Christians. "The institution of the Holy Eucharist, both as a *sacrament* and *sacrifice*, is followed by another—the institution of a new *priesthood*. How could our Saviour have said, *Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you*, unless He had resolved to establish a ministry upon earth, whereby He would renew, even to the end of time, the great mystery He thus commands us to receive ? He begins it to-day in the Cenacle. The twelve Apostles are the first to partake of it ; but observe what He says to them : *Do this for a commemoration of me*. By these words He gives them power to change bread into His body, and wine into His blood ; and this sublime power shall be perpetuated in the Church, by holy

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\* 2 Cor. xi. 29.

ordination, even to the end of the world. Jesus will continue to operate, by the ministry of mortal and sinful men, the mystery of the Last Supper. By thus enriching His Church with the one and perpetual sacrifice, He also gives the means of *abiding in him*, for He gives us, as He promised, the *bread of life*.\*

“Christ, therefore, at His Last Supper, not only instituted the Holy Eucharist, but also that other wonderful work of His in the Church, namely, the *Christian priesthood*.”

The Apostle St. Paul does not omit to give the words whereby our Lord empowered His Apostles to renew what He Himself had done. He tells us that as often as the priest consecrates the body and blood of Christ, he shows the death of the Lord, thus expressing the oneness there is between the sacrifice of the cross and that of the altar.

*Let a man then, says the same Apostle, prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that chalice.*

“What could be more just than that having to be initiated in so intimate a manner with the mystery of redemption, we contract so close union with the divine Victim, we should banish from our hearts sin and affection to sin ?

*“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him,* says our Lord. Could there be a closer union, God and man abiding in each other?”†

I think it may be useful, at the conclusion of this chapter, to subjoin a summary of the last discourse of Jesus to His Apostles on that night in the Cenacle, and on His way to the Garden of Olives. The following account and summary is taken from the “Liturgical Year”‡ :—

“Judas has left the Cenacle, and, profiting by the darkness, has reached the place where the enemies of his Saviour are assembled. Jesus then turns to His faithful Apostles, and says to them :

\* The “Liturgical Year,” Maunday-Thursday.

† “Liturgical Year,” Maunday-Thursday. ‡ Ibid.

*Now is the Son of man glorified.\** Yes, His Passion is to be followed by triumph and glory ; and the Passion has already begun, for Judas has commenced his work of betraying Him. Meanwhile the Apostles, forgetting the trouble into which they had been thrown by Jesus telling them that one of the twelve was about to betray Him, began to dispute among themselves *which of them should seem to be the greater.*† They have not forgotten the words spoken by Jesus to Peter, when He made him the Rock on which He would build His Church ; and here, at the supper, they have seen their divine Master wash the feet of Peter first. On the other hand, John's affectionate familiarity with Jesus, during the same supper, has made some of them argue that he who was most loved would be most honoured. Jesus puts an end to the dispute by giving to these future pastors of His Church a lesson of humility. There shall, it is true, be a head among them ; but, says our Redeemer, *let him that is the greater among you become as younger ; and he that is the leader as he that serveth.* Then, turning towards Peter, He thus addresses him : *Simon, Simon ! behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.* This last interview is, as it were, our Saviour's Testament ; He provides for His Church before leaving her. The Apostles are to be Peter's brethren, but Peter is to be their head. . . . Peter alone is to confirm his brethren in the faith. "His teaching shall ever be conformable to divine truth ; it shall ever be infallible. Jesus has prayed that it may be so. Such a prayer is all powerful, and thereby the Church, ever docile to the voice of Peter, shall for ever maintain the doctrine of Christ."

Jesus, having provided for the future of His Church, by the words he addressed to Peter, thus speaks affectionately to all the eleven :‡ *Little children ! yet a little while I am with you.*

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\* St. John, xiii. 31. † St. Luke, xxii. 24. ‡ St. John, xiii. 33 38.



*Love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.* Peter says to Him : *Lord ! whither goest thou ? Whither I go, answers Jesus, thou canst not follow me ; but thou shalt follow hereafter. Why cannot I follow thee now ?* again asks Peter ; *I will lay down my life for thee. Wilt thou,* replies Jesus, *lay down thy life for me ? Amen, amen, I say to thee, the cock shall not crow till thou deny me thrice.* Peter's love for Jesus had too much of the human about it, for it was not based on humility. Presumption comes from pride ; it almost always results in a fall.

But let us return to the instructions contained in the last words spoken by Jesus before He leaves His disciples. *I am,\** says He, *the way, the truth and the life. If you love me, keep my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever. I will not leave you orphans ; I will come to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. If you loved me, you would be glad, because I go to the Father ! I will not now speak many things with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I : arise, let us go hence.*

Deeply impressed by these words, the disciples arise, and, after the hymn of thanksgiving has been said, they accompany Jesus to Mount Olivet.

He continues His instructions as they go along. He takes occasion from the passing by a vine to speak of the effects produced by divine grace in the soul of man : *I am the true vine,†* He says, *and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear*

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\* St. John, xiv.      † St. John, xv.

*fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. If any man abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain.*

He next speaks to them of the persecutions that await them, and of the hatred the world will have of them. He renews the promise He had made them of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and tells them that it is to their advantage that He Himself should leave them. He assures them that they shall obtain whatever they ask of the Father in His name. *The Father,\** He adds, *loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. The disciples say to him: Now we know that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God. Do you now believe?* answered Jesus; *behold the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.† All you shall be scandalized in me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*

Peter again protests that he will be faithful to his Master; the rest may abandon Him, if they will, but *he* will keep with Him to the last. It should indeed be so, for he has received so much more from Jesus than the others have; but he is again humbled by being told again of his coming speedy fall. Jesus then, calmly raising up His eyes to heaven, says:‡ *Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. I have finished the*

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\* St. John, xvi. † St. Matt, xxvi. 31, 32. ‡ St. John, xvii.



*work thou gavest me to do; I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me. They have known that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them; I pray not for the world. And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also are. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name. Those whom thou gavest me have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who, through their word, shall believe in me, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may know that thou hast sent me. Father, I will that where I am, they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me; that they may see the glory which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world. Just Father, the world hath not known me, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

Such are the outpourings of the loving Heart of Jesus, as He crosses the Brook Cedron, and ascends with His disciples the Mount of Olives.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PRAYER AND AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

IN Gethsemani there was a garden in which Christ was accustomed to pray. After the Last Supper, Christ went forth to that garden with His eleven Apostles. When they had entered there :

(Mt.) *Jesus said to his disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray. (L.) Pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* In the meantime, from amongst the eleven disciples He took with Him Peter, John and James, and assigned them a place in the interior of the garden. After taking these three disciples with Him: (Mt.) *Jesus began to grow sorrowful, and to be sad, or, as it is more forcibly expressed in Latin, cepit povere, tædere contristari et mæstus esse.* Then he saith to them: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here, and watch with me. (L.) And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast, and kneeling down he prayed, saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me; but yet not my will, but thine be done.*

After this: (Mt.) *He cometh to his disciples, and findeth them asleep, and he saith to Peter: What! could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Again the second time he went and prayed, saying: *My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done.* After this prayer He came a second time to His disciples, and found them sleeping, *for their eyes were heavy.* And this time, out of His great benignity and compassion, He did not reproach them, but left them quietly, having pity on their weakness.

And leaving them, he went again, and he prayed a third time, saying the self-same word. At the same time, His soul became oppressed with the greatest fear and sorrow, and then it was that that happened which St. Luke mentions: *And being in an agony, he prayed the longer, and his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.*

Being thus in an agony and in prayer, although the terrible sentence of His death was not to be removed, His prayer was not without fruit, but He obtained through it even at that moment some divine consolation, for: (L) *An angel from heaven appeared, strengthening him.*

Comforted by an angel, and His soul strengthened by prayer,

Jesus arose, and coming a third time to His disciples, He (Mt.) *saieth to them: Sleep ye now, and take your rest.* These words were not used in any ironical sense, as St. Chrysostom and Emissenus would have us think; but, according to the other Fathers, they were used in a serious, compassionate and mild spirit. For Christ was full of compassion for the weakness of His Apostles, and, therefore, when He came to them the third time, He wished them in reality to continue their sleep until the approach of Judas, when He said to them: *Sufficit, it is enough.* (M.M.) *Rise up, let us go. Behold he that will betray me is at hand.*

Among the things to be considered in the foregoing narrative are, first of all, the localities. These are, the Mount of Olives, the Brook Cedron, and the Garden of Gethsemani.

The Mount of Olives took its name from the olive trees growing there. As described by Dean Stanley, in his "Sinai and Palestine," it is situated to the east of Jerusalem, with its outlying ridge to the north and south of the city. It is only 180 feet higher than Mount Sion.

From Olivet, Jerusalem is seen on an elevation higher than the hills in its immediate neighbourhood—its towers, its walls standing out against the sky, and not against any high background.

It is a long ridge, with four distinct summits, which are now distinguished by traditional names.

1. "The Galilee," from the supposition that there the angels stood, and said, "Ye men of Galilee," or that it was the "Galilee" to which Christ retired after His resurrection.

2. "The Ascension," covered by the village and mosque and church of Jebel-el-Tur (the Arabic name for Olivet, as for all elevated summits), and the supposed scene of that event.

3. "The Prophets," from the curious catacomb called the "Prophets' Tomb" on its side.

4. "The Mount of Offence," so called from Solomon's idol worship.

The northern outlier has been in modern times usually called "Scopus," on the supposition of its identity with the hill so called in the Siege of Titus ; the southern, "The Hill of Evil Counsel," marked from afar by the single wind-driven tree called the "tree of Judas."

The history of the Mount of Olives is inseparably united with the history of the holy city. The name by which it is sometimes called, "the mountain before," *i.e.*, "east of the city," or "the mountain" simply, indicates its near position. It was the open ground of pleasure, for worship, for any purpose that it might suit: the Park, the "Ceramicus," the "Campus Martius" of Jerusalem.

In its connection with ancient history, long before the conquest of Jebus by David, the northern summit of Olivet had, it would seem, under the name of Nob, been selected as the seat of the tabernacle after the destruction of Shiloh and the loss of the Ark. Close within sight of the unconquered fortress of the Jebusites, the worship of Israel was there conducted during all the earlier years of Saul, and even after the destruction of the sanctuary by his violence, the sanctity of Olivet was respected. David, before the Temple was built, was accustomed to worship God at the top of Mount Olivet.

It was also the spot where the sacrifice of the *red heifer* was performed, as the only sacrifice which was to take place outside the camp in the wilderness ; it was by analogy excluded from the Temple courts, and was celebrated on the summit of Mount Olivet.

It was by the "ascent of the Olives" that David went up on his flight from Jerusalem to Machnaim, at the news of Absalom's revolt. It was at the top of the mount he met Chushai, and had his last view of the rebellious city. It was a little away past the top that he encountered Siba and the asses laden with provisions. In fact, all the mournful procession, as narrated in the 2nd book of

Kings,\* in all its stages of ascent and descent, is the most remarkable event in the earlier history of the Mount of Olives.

The last glory of this place belongs not to the old dispensation, but to the new. "Contrast the blank which Olivet presents to the Jewish pilgrims of the middle ages, only dignified by the sacrifice of 'the red heifer,' and the vision, too great for words, which it offers to the Christian traveller of all times as the most detailed and most authentic abiding place of Jesus Christ.

"It is useless to seek traces of His presence in the streets of the since ten times captured city. It is impossible not to find them in the free space of the Mount of Olives."†

*The Brook Cedron.*—This is a stream, or ravine, in the valley east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives, and which discharges itself into the Dead Sea. It has generally but little water, and often none; but after storms or heavy rain it swells and runs with much impetuosity, as Calmet tells us. It is said that water was running in that ravine in our Lord's time, but that now the stream runs underground, and breaks out as a fountain lower down.

This valley, according to ancient tradition, is identical with the valley of Josaphat, or of the Divine Judgment, and has been long regarded, both by Jewish and Christian pilgrims, as the destined scene of the judgment of the world. As to the import of the name Cedron, various conjectures are made. It is not true that it takes its name from *cedars*, as cedars were not found growing there. Josephus says that Solomon planted cedars in many parts of Judea, but not in this valley. Looking to the root of the Hebrew name, it signifies a dark and gloomy valley, either designed to characterize the turbid character and violent flow of its waters as a mere winter torrent, soiled and swollen by the heavy rains, and surcharged with mud and gravel; or, as Baring Gould says: "It is, indeed, a gloomy valley; the sun only shines into its

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\* Ch. xv. and xvi. † Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine."

bottom at a quarter past ten on the shortest day, that is three hours after it has been shining in Jerusalem, and in like manner the darkness settles into its depths three hours before it is night in Jerusalem."

"Two incidents render this valley remarkable, and are associated with it above all others:—1st. When David, the greatest of the kings of Israel, betrayed by his own friends and abandoned by his own people, was driven from his throne, *he passed over the Brook Cedron, and went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up* (2 Kings, xv. 23-30). 2nd. David's Son and David's Lord, the great Messiah, when about to be delivered into the hands of His enemies by one of His own Apostles, and to be deserted by all the rest, went over the Brook Cedron, and up to the Mount of Olives beyond it, where He endured the agony in which His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (*ita Imperial Dict.*).

*Gethsemani*.—This garden is on the side of the Mount of Olives. The name is compounded of two Hebrew words, signifying "oil-press." It was so called on account of its being the place where oil from the olives growing in the neighbourhood was wont to be made. It is the place made sacred and memorable by the last sufferings of Christ. All that we learn from the Gospel history of this locality is, that Gethsemani was a garden—by which is probably to be understood an orchard—on the farther side of the brook, and somewhere about the foot of the Mount of Olives. The traditional site fixed on, it is supposed at the visit of St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, in A.D. 326, places it a very little beyond the Cedron, and quite near the Church of the Blessed Virgin, alleged to have been built over her tomb.

Dean Stanley gives us a description of the present state of the locality:—"The Garden of Gethsemani is now enclosed, and in it are pointed out some traditional sites, such as the "Grotto of the Agony;" the "Rocky Bank of the Apostles;" the *terra damnata* of



the betrayal. There are also eight olive trees, which, by their manifest difference from all the others on the mountain, have always struck even the most indifferent observers. They are now indeed less striking, in the modern enclosure built round them by the Franciscan monks, than when they stood free and unprotected on the rough hill side; but they will remain, so long as their already protracted life is spared, the most venerable of their race on the face of the earth; their gnarled trunks and scanty foliage will always be regarded as the most affecting of the sacred memorials in or about Jerusalem; the most nearly approaching to the everlasting hills themselves, in the force in which they carry us back to the events of the Gospel history.”\*

Having given the description of the localities sufficient to form an idea of them, we have now to follow our Saviour, and consider His sorrow and prayer in the garden.

Christ, on leaving the supper-room, goes out with His eleven Apostles through the east gate of the city, and descends the steep path to the bottom of the valley; He crosses the Brook Cedron and enters the Garden of Gethsemani, whither he had often before led His Apostles. Suddenly his soul is overpowered with grief. “His human nature experiences, as it were, a suspension of that beatitude which results from its union with the Divinity. This, His humanity, will be interiorly supported, even to the very last moment of His Passion, but it must bear everything that it is possible for it to bear.”†

Jesus began *to fear*, to be sorrowful, and to be sad. *Cæpit pavere tædere, contristari et mæstus esse.*

He began to fear. Our first parent began to fear when he heard the voice of God calling him in the Garden of Eden: *Adam, where art thou?* He answered, filled with fear: *I have heard thy voice in Paradise, and I feared.* In atonement for Adam’s sin and its consequences, Jesus, the second Adam, now walking in another garden,

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\* “Sinai and Palestine.” † “Liturgical Year.”



that of Gethsemani, fears. The causes of this fear are not difficult to understand, when we remember that it was a night of so much sin, of spiritual darkness and misery, a night of treachery and wickedness. There was no one there to comfort or assist our Saviour, and for these reasons He might well have used the words of holy Job :\* *At this my heart trembleth, and is moved out of its place.*

*He began to be sorrowful and to be sad. Cæpit contristari et mæstus esse.* Great was the sorrow and sadness of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemani. It was great, (1) by reason of its material object, namely, the sins of men ; (2) by reason of its formal object, namely, the knowledge which Christ had of the malice of sin and the offended majesty of God ; and (3) by reason of the principle from which that sorrow proceeded, namely, Christ's infinite love for us and for His Father. No other ever loved so much or sought His Father's glory with so much zeal. Hence, Christ, with the clear Divine vision which He had, at the sight of the number of those that would be lost ; at the sight of all living human beings, and especially those around Him who were persecuting Him to death ; at the sight of the future ; His Passion the next day ; His abandonment that night—He, Christ, utters those words of intense suffering : *My soul is sorrowful even unto death ; stay you here, and watch with me.*

He leaves them, and goes to a grotto which is about a stone's throw distant. Even to this day it exists, perpetuating the memory of that terrible event. *And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast.* The Latin word *avulsus* signifies the effort which our Saviour made to withdraw from them at that moment, for His love for them was greater than the love of any other being. And this may be contrasted with the separation of our souls from God caused by sin.

*The Prayer of Jesus to His Father.—Father, all things are*

*possible to thee. Remove this chalice from me; but not what I will, but what thou wilt.* No, it is not now possible that it should be removed. It is now necessary. The chalice cannot pass away, unless man perish and God continue to punish with a two-edged sword; unless the angels withdraw their help, and the devils reign, and heaven's gates remain closed. Jesus, who wept over Jerusalem and over the tomb of Lazarus, and had pity on the multitude when they had no bread, now weeps tears of blood for us, and His mercy prevails.

Christ, as our Creed tells, had two wills, as He had two natures, divine and human. The human will shrank from death, but conformed itself to the divine will, which urged its necessity.

We acknowledge in that one person of Christ two voices; one of fear, the other of love. Fear wishes the chalice to pass, but love desires to drain it to the dregs. Fear says: *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me.* On the other hand, when the decree of the Holy Trinity is proposed to Him, and with it the thought of His glorious resurrection, the desire of the angels, the lamentations of the holy fathers, the salvation of men, and, finally, the will of His heavenly Father, *love* cries out, and says:—*Not my will, but thine be done. Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

If we, after the example of Christ, ask what is the will of our heavenly Father, our Saviour will answer us in the words: "And this is the will of my Father, that sent me; that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

*The Agony and Sweat of Blood.*—Whilst praying, a sweat of blood flows from His body and bathes the ground. It is not merely a swooning, it is an agony, that He suffers. There was a two-fold agony of our Saviour in His Passion—an agony of mind in the garden, and an agony of body on the Cross.

The agony of mind was occasioned by the mental struggle (1) between the God-man and death; (2) between the greatest joy

and the greatest sorrow, that is, the beatific vision (which His soul always possessed) and the present darkness of His soul ; (3) between the soul and body of Christ when about to be separated by death.

As to the sweat of blood, the Evangelist does not say precisely that the sweat was of blood, but that it was blood-like in its drops. It has, however, been generally understood that the excessive torture of the mind produces a sweat of blood. Several instances of such exudations of blood have been known to take place. (See D. W. Stroud's "Treatise on the Physical Causes of the Death of Christ.")

Christ, after His agony, again accepts the chalice prepared for Him. "But what a chalice ! every pain that body and soul can suffer ; the sins of the whole world taken upon Himself, and crying out vengeance against Him ; the ingratitude of men, many of whom will make His sacrifice useless. Jesus has to accept all this, and at the very time when He seems to be left to His human nature. The power of the Divinity, which is in Him, supports Him ; but it does not prevent Him from feeling every suffering, just as though He had been mere man. He begins His prayer by asking that the chalice may be taken from Him ; He ends it by saying to His Father : *Not my will, but thine be done.*"\*

Twice He returns to His disciples, whom He had asked to watch near Him, but each time finds them asleep. At length He speaks to them, saying : *Sleep ye now, and take your rest. Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

Then, resuming the energy of His divine courage, He adds : *Rise, let us go ! Behold he is at hand that will betray me.*

We may appropriately conclude this chapter with the lesson read in the Tenebræ Office for Maunday-Thursday, and taken from the Lamentations of Jeremias :—

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\* "Liturgical Year."

“*Aleph.* How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people ! How is the mistress of nations become as a widow ; the princess of provinces made tributary !

“*Beth.* Weeping, she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks ; there is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her ; all her friends have despised her, and are become her enemies.

“*Ghimel.* Juda hath removed her dwelling-place because of her affliction, and the greatness of her bondage. She hath dwelt among the nations, and she hath found no rest ; her persecutors have taken her in the midst of straits.

“*Daleth.* The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast. All her gates are broken down ; her priests sigh ; her virgins are in affliction, and she is oppressed with bitterness.

“*He.* Her adversaries are become her lords ; her enemies are enriched, because the Lord hath spoken against her for the multitude of her iniquities. Her children are led into captivity before the face of the oppressors.”

These lamentations, in their *literal sense*, refer, as is evident, to the ruin of the city of Jerusalem ; but in their spiritual sense they are the lamentations of the Church militant, and of Christ Himself, on account of the innumerable evils introduced by sin into the world, and the spiritual ruin of souls. It is for this reason that the Church, during Holy Week, in order to celebrate the bitter sorrow of Christ, immolated for our sins, adopts the mournful chants of Jeremias. The prophet considers the misery of the city, and seeks its cause. He discovers that the cause is its sins. He supplicates God for mercy, and introduces Jerusalem, humbly offering her supplications.

To understand the lamentations in the spiritual sense as the wailings of the Church, and of Christ Himself, over the sad and mournful effects of sin, it is to be remarked :—

1. That Jerusalem oppressed by Nabuchodonosor is a prophetic figure of the future destruction of the Jewish nation, on account of the crime of deicide perpetrated in the death of Christ.

2. Jerusalem devastated mystically represents the human race lost by the sin of Adam and the deceit of the devil, and its falling away from original justice and innocence, and the loss of beatitude.

3. It also represents the Christian soul consenting to mortal sin, and thus, having lost justice and the kingdom of God, brings itself under the dominion of Satan, whose state is far more miserable than that of the terrestrial Jerusalem.

4. Jerusalem desolate is a figure of the Church militant, as oppressed by her persecutors and the sins of her children. She does not suffer ruin, but sorrow and desolation.

5. Finally, the prophet himself mourning is a figure of Christ suffering, whose affections, and the bitterness of whose sorrow he expresses as if he would understand the sighs, the words, and the lamentations coming forth from the soul of Christ during His bitter agony, when He accepts the chalice of His Passion.

The lesson concludes with the following supplication and the responses :—

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, be converted to the Lord thy God.

“*R.* He prayed to His Father on Mount Olivet : Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

“*V.* Watch, and pray that ye may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE BETRAYAL.

JUDAS, who betrayed Him, knew the place where Jesus was accustomed to spend the night in prayer with His disciples. Very

likely, on that same night he made enquiries about this at the Last Supper, so that he might the more securely accomplish his design.

Whilst Jesus was yet speaking to His disciples, saying to them : (Mt.) *Rise, let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray me; behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the Chief-priests and Ancients of the people.* St. John says that they came *with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

(L.) *Judas went before them.* (Mt.) *And forthwith coming to Jesus, said: Hail Rabbi! and he kissed him.* (M.) *And he that betrayed him had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully.* When, therefore, Judas had kissed Him : (Mt.) *Jesus said to him: Friend, whereto art thou come?* (L.) *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?*

In order to kiss Jesus, Judas preceded the crowd a little way, as if he did not belong to that party. After the kiss, he fell back and joined it. (J.) *Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with them. As soon, therefore, as he had said to them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground. Again, therefore, he asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, you seek me, let these go their way.* (L.) *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.* (Mt.) *Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus, and held him. And behold one of them that were with Jesus (Simon Peter, as St. John tells us), stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword, and striking the servant of the High-priest (whose name was Malchus, according to St. John), cut off his ear (his right ear, according to St. Luke).* (L.) *But Jesus, answering, said: Suffer ye this far. And when he had touched his ear, he healed it.* (Mt.) *Then Jesus saith to Peter: Put up again thy sword*



*into its place ; for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword. (J.) The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (Mt.) Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?*

After this, Jesus, addressing the Chief-priests, the magistracy of the Temple, and the seniors and the multitude, said to them: (Mt.) *You are come out as it were to a robber with swords and clubs to apprehend me. I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me. Now all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then the disciples, all leaving him, fled.*

(J.) *Then the band and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus and bound him.*

The history of this part of the Passion is given by the four Evangelists in terms that are harmonious throughout, although each of them contributes something special to make the account complete.

In Holy Scripture, mention is made of four celebrated men of the name of Judas:—1. Judas, the fourth son of Jacob and Lia (Gen. xxix, 35), who saved his brother Joseph from death. He received the special blessing from Jacob, and became the patriarch and father of the Jews. 2. Judas Machabeus, the son of Mathathias, who was valiant and strong from his youth up, and who was constituted by his father the High-priest of the Jews, and their leader in war (1 Mac. ii. 65, 66). 3. Judas, the Apostle, called Thaddæus, and invoked under that name in the Litany of the Saints. He was the son of Alpheus (Mt. x. 3) and of Mary (xiii. 55). He was the author of the seventh of the Catholic epistles. 4. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed our Saviour.

It is of this last that we have now to speak. He was called Iscariot, because he was a native of the town of that name (Iscariot). Some say that he was descended from the tribe of

Benjamin, Others, that he was from the tribe of Ephraim. From the Gospels and the Acts we learn that he was (1) the son of Simon (St. John vi. 72). 2. That he was the disciple and betrayer of Christ (St. Luke vi. 6), and prevaricator, who fell away from the Apostolate (Acts, i. 25). 3. That seeing Jesus condemned, he was led by false repentance. He returned the thirty pieces of silver, saying: *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood, and going, hanged himself with a rope, and, being hanged, burst asunder in the midst* (St. Matt. xxvii. 3-5).

Concerning this man Christ prophesied, first, his condemnation, in the words: *None of them* (the Apostles) *perisheth except the son of perdition* (Judas).<sup>\*</sup> Secondly, his betrayal: *One of you shall betray me*; and other texts, as quoted above. Thirdly, his sinfulness: *You are clean, but not all*.<sup>†</sup> For He knew who it was that would betray Him.

It was one foul passion in which he indulged that brought Judas down even into hell by reason of his guilt. That passion was covetousness. It does not seem a strong passion to produce grave consequences; but the registers of crime show numerous cases in which motives apparently trifling have led to most dreadful deeds. Murder has been committed through jealousy, or for the sake of some insignificant gain. Slight affronts have instigated those who were not of a very passionate temperament to violent deeds, and to inflict a death-blow.

In the betrayal proceeding from, or as a consequence of the passion which devoured him, we find the following sins, all of which Judas was guilty:—Avarice, infidelity, sacrilege, simony, despair, suicide, hypocrisy, robbery; *because*, as St. John says, *he was a thief*.<sup>‡</sup>

The seven circumstances of a human act are found in a remarkable manner to the betrayal:—

*Quis.* Who was it that betrayed our Lord? An Apostle and

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<sup>\*</sup> St. John, xvii. 12. <sup>†</sup> St. John, xiii. 10. <sup>‡</sup> St. John, xii. 4.

disciple. He is thus mentioned in the list of the Apostles : *And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*

*Quid.* Whom did he betray? The only-begotten Son of God. The betrayer afterwards, in his remorse and impenitence, acknowledged his guilt, when he said : *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*

*Ubi.* Where did the betrayal take place? In the Garden of Olives, the place of prayer : *And a hymn being sung, they went out into Mount Olivet.*

*Quibus auxiliis.* Through whose help? A great multitude : *As he yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the Chief-priests and the Ancients of the people.*

*Cur.* Why, or through what motive? Covetousness or avarice : *What will you give me, and I will deliver him up to you?*

*Quomodo.* In what manner? With swords and clubs : *Hold him fast,* he tells them, *and lead him away cautiously.*

*Quando.* On the first day of the Azymes, when the *Jews immolated the Paschal lamb*, at night. The betrayal was a work of darkness. *This is your hour,* says our divine Lord. *Every one that doeth evil hateth the light.*

Taking the circumstances of Christ's arrest in order, we have to consider, in the first place, the great multitude that came with Judas to capture Him.

While Jesus was speaking His last words to His disciples, a numerous body of armed men enter the garden, with torches in their hands—a cohort of soldiers. A cohort was the tenth part of a legion, and numbered 500, or at least 300 soldiers. It is said that this body was made up of the Jewish Guards, who were kept employed in connection with the Temple, and the Roman soldiers. The procession may be supposed to be arranged in the following manner :—The Roman troops, the Jewish Guards, accompanied by the princes of the people ; the Chief-priest, the

Scribes and Pharisees, and a great multitude of the populace. With Judas at their head, they pass through the city gates, they cross the Brook Cedron, and ascend the declivity on the opposite side, and go towards the place where the eight Apostles are trembling with fear and sorrow. These, seeing the approach of the soldiers, and hearing the noise of the multitude, fly for refuge to their Lord and Master, whom they find wiping away the sweat of blood, near the place where He had suffered His agony, standing by the three Apostles, whom He is wakening from their sleep.

*And as he was yet speaking, behold a great multitude approached, and Judas, one of the twelve, went before them.*

Judas gives them a sign by which they should know Christ. *And forthwith coming to Jesus, said: Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed him.* The betrayal is thus made by a profanation of the sign of friendship. *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?* "These piercing words," says the author of the "Liturgical Year," "should have made the traitor throw himself at his Master's feet and ask pardon; but it was too late—he feared the soldiers." "Judas erroneously imagined that the thought which he bore in his mind was profoundly concealed from all. And in truth, it was concealed from the eyes of his fellow-disciples up to the last; but the Lord Himself saw his plan gradually ripening, and never disguised from Judas that his heart was read. He said to him before: *What thou dost, do quickly*; and now, when Judas kissed him, He said: *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?*"\* Judas betrayed our Lord with a kiss; so did Joab kiss Amasa when about to stab him.† So did Nero kiss his mother when he ordered her to be murdered.

The author of the "Holy Court," speaking of the perfidy of this kiss, says: "Judas makes use of the most holy things to betray Holiness itself. He employs the kiss of peace to begin war; he carries poison in his heart, and honey in his mouth; he puts on

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\* "History of the Passion," by Steinmeyer. † 2 Kings, x. 9, 10.

the spirit of Jesus to betray Him. This shows us plainly that covetous and traitorous people are farthest from God and nearest to the devil."

It is remarked by some that this is the only instance on record of our Lord having kissed anyone. It is, however, generally said that it was the common manner of salutation amongst the Apostles, and when they approached our Saviour they saluted Him in this manner. He did not, on this occasion, refuse the kiss of Judas, and our Lord's kiss was the only recompense that the unfortunate man was ever to receive.

The Scripture gives many examples of the kiss being used as a sign of friendship; but only three of its being used by perfidious and false friends.

Thus, true and special friendship was shown in the following instances:—

1. Laban, embracing Jacob, and heartily kissing him, brought him into his house (Gen. xxix. 13).
2. Moses kissed Aaron on Mount Horeb (Exod. iv. 27).
3. Moses went out to meet his kinsman Jethro, and worshipped and kissed him, and they saluted one another with words of peace (Exod. xviii. 7).
4. Samuel took a little vial of oil, and poured it upon his (Saul's) head, and kissed him, saying: *Behold the Lord hath anointed thee* (1 Kings, x. 1).
5. David kissed Absalom after he returned from exile (2 Kings, xiv. 33).

In the Acts of the Apostles (xx. 37) it is mentioned that the faithful of the Church at Ephesus, falling on the neck of Paul, they kissed him. And in the parable of the prodigal son, it was with a kiss that his father received him. He fell upon his neck and kissed him (St. Luke, iv. 20).

The three examples of the kisses of perfidious friends are:—  
(1) *And Joab said to Amasa: God save thee, my brother. And*

he took Amasa by the chin with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa did not take notice of the sword which Joab had, and he struck him in the side, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and gave him not a second wound, and he died (2 Kings, xx. 9).

The second case of similar perfidy, although the kiss is not expressly mentioned, is that recorded in the second book of Machabees (iv. 34): Andronicus went to Onias, and gave him his right hand, with an oath (in token of friendship), and (though he were suspected by him) persuaded him to come forth out of the sanctuary, and immediately slew him without any regard to justice.

The third was the case of Judas, as above narrated.

Let us learn from these examples to beware of false friends, who flatter and fawn upon us only to deceive and betray us.

Take the world as the generic name for them. "O perfidious world, there is no security against thy deceits," St. Augustine exclaims. "O traitor world, that promises everything good, and gives everything evil. You promise life, and you give death; you promise joy, and you give sorrow; you promise rest, and you give confusion; you promise to stand, and you soon fall away."

*His Enemies fall to the Ground.*—The servants of the High-priest cannot lay hands on Jesus unless He, their Victim, permit them to do so. With one single word He cast them prostrate on the ground. That word was: *Ego sum—I am*. In the Douay Bible it is translated: *I am he*. It is supposed that it was the Hebrew name of God which Christ here made use of. *I am who am*—that name which was only to be pronounced by the High-priest in the Holy of Holies. At hearing it the soldiers and entire crowd, together with Judas, go backward, and fall to the ground, not in mockery or derision, as some suppose, but through the real divine power which Christ desired to manifest before allowing them to take and bind Him.

*Ego sum—I am*. This expression contains the compendium of all God's perfections. It only applies to Him to whom all power



is given in heaven and on earth, and who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. It belongs to Him alone in *quo sunt omnia, ex quo omnia, per quem omnia* : *Of him, and by him, and in him are all things.*\* It is as if He would say : "I am your Father, your Lord, your reward, your crown. I am He who for 4,000 years was expected by all nations and tribes and peoples of the earth ; *the expected of nations* ; the Messiah promised from the beginning. I am He whom the Prophets foretold ; who for nine months was confined in the Virgin Mary's womb ; who was laid upon straw in the crib at Bethlehem ; who was baptized in the Jordan ; who fasted forty days in the wilderness ; who, after three years preaching and teaching, and doing good to all men, am now betrayed by one of my own disciples, and delivered up to the gentiles, *to be mocked, scourged and crucified.*"

I shall now speak only briefly of the other incidents of this portion of the Gospel narrative. They take our Lord and bind Him. They bind Him who alone was free, and who came to liberate those who were in bondage. Thereupon St. Peter defends Him. He drew his sword, and cut off the ear of Malchus, one of the soldiers. Jesus then and there proved His divine power by restoring the ear, and healing the wound before all the multitude. Some say that this Malchus afterwards became converted, and professed the Christian faith. Others say that he was the soldier who inflicted the blow, or struck our Saviour in the face, in the hall of the High-priest. But these are only suppositions. One thing is, however, certain about him, on the authority of the Evangelist, St. John, that is, that he was one of the servants of the High-priest, and Benedict XIV. thinks that he was Annas' servant.

Our Lord, after healing the ear of Malchus, commanded St. Peter to put his sword into its place : *For all that take the sword shall perish with the sword, &c.*

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\* Rom. xi. 36.

A little before this, St. Peter, by *word*, tried to dissuade Christ from enduring His Passion : *Lord, this shall not be to thee* ; and then his word received the severe rebuke : *Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art a scandal to me*. Now, his interference by *act* is severely reproved, and he is reminded how far he was from understanding the mind of God by the words : *Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently twelve legions of angels ? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled ?*

Then all His disciples *relictō eo abierunt*—*Then all His disciples, leaving Him, went away*. St. John Chrysostom says, that St. John the Evangelist did not run away with the others, or like them, and therefore some exception may be understood when the Scripture says *omnes, all*. Maldonatus, however, and others with him, teach that there is no reason why it should not be taken in its fully literal sense—that all of them went away at first ; but SS. Peter and John, as appears from the Scripture, must have returned immediately and followed afar off : *Simon Peter followed Jesus, and another disciple*.

There is only one other incident to be mentioned here, and I refer to it because it is singular and remarkable. It is narrated only by St. Mark, and it is : That after our Lord was taken, a young man followed, *having a linen cloth cast about his naked body* ; some of the multitude laid hold of him, *but he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them*. Some think that this young man was St. James, the relative of our Lord ; others, that it was St. John ; others, that it was St. Mark himself ; and others, that he was from the house where Jesus had eaten the Paschal supper, or a young man from some neighbouring hamlet, who, on going to sleep, heard the noise of the soldiers and the shouts of the people, and hurried to the place to see what was going on. This incident serves to show us the state of confusion and excitement that prevailed in the neighbourhood on that dreadful night. His indiscreet curiosity brought him there to see, to hear, and to know. Thus he fell into danger.

But he was set free, or freed himself, not so much because of inattention, or pre-occupation, or indulgence on the part of the Jews, but only through the special protection of Christ, who did not wish this young man to be involved in His disgrace. He did not wish any person to suffer on this occasion but Himself, and hence He secured the safety of His Apostles before He was taken and bound.

St. Matthew concludes the history of the arrest of Christ with the words : *Now all this was done, that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled.*

The author of the "Liturgical Year" thus concludes his remarks on the devotions of Maunday Thursday :—

"What a day is this we have been spending ! How full of Jesus' love. He has given us His body and blood to be our food ; He has instituted the priesthood of the New Testament ; He has poured out upon the world the sublime instructions of His loving heart. We have seen Him struggling with the feelings of human weakness, as He beheld the chalice of His Passion that was prepared for Him ; but He triumphed over all, in order to save *us*. We have seen Him betrayed, fettered, and led captive into the holy city, there to consummate His sacrifice. Let us adore and love this Jesus, who might have saved us by one and the least of all these humiliations, but whose love for us was not satisfied unless He drank to the very dregs the chalice He had accepted from His Father."

The same author gives the English translation of the following beautiful Preface of the Gothic Missal of Spain, which will assist us in our devotion towards the mystery we have been commemorating :—

*Illation.*—"It is meet and just that we should give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord ! Almighty Father ! and to Jesus Christ thy Son. We have been fostered by His humanity, exalted by His humility, set free by His betrayal, redeemed by His blood, fed by

His flesh. He, on this day, delivered Himself for us, and loosened the bonds of our sin. He showed to His faithful people the riches of His goodness and humility, by deigning to wash the feet of His very betrayer, whose hand He already perceived to be engaged in his wicked deed. But what wonder that He, on the eve of His voluntary death, when about to do the work of a servant, should take off His garments: *He who being in the form of God had emptied himself?* What wonder that He should gird Himself with a towel, who, *taking the form of a servant, was found in the habit of man?* What wonder that He should put water into a basin, for the washing of the feet of His disciples, Who shed His blood upon the earth for cleansing away the defilements of sinners? What wonder that with the towel wherewith He was girt, He should wipe the feet He had washed, He that with the flesh wherewith He had clothed Himself, had strengthened the feet of them that were to preach the Gospel? Before girding Himself with the towel, He took off the garments He wore; but when He took the form of a servant, and *emptied himself*, He laid not aside what He had, but assumed what He had not. When he was crucified, He was stripped of His garments, and when dead was wrapped in linen: and His whole Passion was a purification of them that believe. When, therefore, He was on the eve of His sufferings, He prepared for them by benefits, given not only to them for whom He was about to suffer death, but even to him who was about to betray Him unto death. Such, indeed, is the importance of humility to man, that the very majesty of God taught it him by His own example. Proud man would have been for ever lost, had not the humble God found him; and thus, he that had been ruined by the pride of the seducer, was saved by the humility of the most loving Redeemer, to whom deservedly all the angels and archangels cry out daily without ceasing, saying with one voice, ‘Holy! Holy! Holy!’”

## CHAPTER VI.

## JESUS BROUGHT BEFORE ANNAS.

AFTER Jesus was taken and bound, (J.) *They led him away to Annas first. (L.) But Peter followed afar off, and so (J.) did another disciple, and that disciple was known to the High-priest (Annas), and went into the court of the High-priest. But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple, therefore, who was known to the High-priest, went out and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter. Now the servants and ministers stood at the fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed themselves. After Peter entered and was warming himself with the ministers: (M.) The maid that was portress saith to him: Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. This was the first denial of St. Peter, which I give as having taken place in the house of Annas. And after this first denial, (M.) he went forth before the court, and the cock crew.*

Christ, standing before Annas, was interrogated by him (J.) *concerning his disciples and his doctrine. To his questions Christ answered: (J.) I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort, and in secret have I spoken nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them; behold they know what things I have said.*

Hearing this answer given with all respect by our Saviour, (J.) *one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest thou the High-priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me? \**

All these events I give here as having taken place in the house of Annas.

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\* St. John, xviii. 13-23.

Then (J.) *Annas sent him bound to Caiphas, the High-priest, (Mt.) where the Scribes and Ancients were assembled, and Peter followed him afar off, even to the court of the High-priest; and going in, he sat with the servants, that he might see the end; or, as St. Mark has it, he sat with the servants at the fire, and warmed himself.*

In this portion of the Gospel history, it is necessary to establish the order of events, as far as possible, and to assign some reason for the order adopted. SS. Mark and Luke say that after the agony and the arrest in the garden, Christ was brought by the Jews to the High-priest, or to the High-priest's house, without indicating the name of the High-priest.

SS. Matthew and John agree in saying that Christ was brought before Caiphas, the High-priest, who was the pontiff of that year. Only St. John says that Christ was brought before Annas *first* (Ch. xviii. 13), and in verse the 24th of the same chapter, he says that Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas. St. John also tells us who Annas was, and who Caiphas was. Annas, he says, was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the High-priest of that year; and *Caiphas was he who had given counsel that one man should die for the people.* These particular references of St. John should be kept in mind as well as the Gospel narrative in the solution of the following question :

The question is, whether those things which St. John narrates in the eighteenth chapter of his Gospel, from verse the 15th to the 23rd, inclusive, took place in the house of Annas, or in the house of Caiphas. The question is controverted; but I consider that the clearest and simplest solution of the question is to let St. John's narrative remain as it is, and allow that those things mentioned in it happened as in the order given by him. That is, in the house of Annas, Jesus was examined concerning His disciples and His doctrine, and received a blow on the face. I have also placed the first denial of St. Peter during the time that Christ was before Annas, and in this I follow the order given by Ludolph, the Saxon,



who says : "The more common opinion is, that the threefold denial began in the court of Annas, and ended in that of Caiphas. And this seems evident from the text of St. John, who, although he makes no mention of Caiphas, but only of Annas, puts first one denial, then the questions which Annas asked Christ, and lastly goes on to the other two denials which took place afterwards in the court of Caiphas. And it may have been that John was known to both High-priests, and brought Peter into the house of each, in the manner explained above, when Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiphas."\*

To remove objections to this theory, I may give the following further explanation. Let the words, *who was father-in-law to Caiphas*, to the end of the 14th, be left out here, and joined to the 24th verse after this manner: *And Annas sent him bound to Caiphas, for Annas was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the High-priest that year; but Caiphas was he who had given counsel, &c.*,—according to this arrangement it would be clear that all these things happened in the house of Annas, which St. John narrates from verse the 15th to the 23rd, inclusively; and that all the rest narrated by the same Evangelist, from verse the 25th to the 27th, happened in the house of Caiphas. I find this explanation given by some authors, but I do not see any necessity for making such a change; by leaving the narrative as it is, in the order of the Evangelist, it would bear the same meaning throughout. For the words, *he was father-in-law to Caiphas, &c.*, to the end of verse 14, are said by the Evangelist in anticipation, or by way of parenthesis, and not that those things which he narrates from verse 15th to the 23rd, inclusive, should be considered as taking place in the house of Caiphas, for in verse the 24th he says that *Annas sent him bound to Caiphas*.

The conjecture that Annas and Caiphas occupied the same palace seems plausible, but it does not solve any difficulty, because

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\* "Matins," p. 123.

it still remains to be answered why Christ was not brought before Caiphas, who gave the order for His arrest, and who had the proper authority to examine His cause; and also, the fact that Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas is against the supposition that both pontiffs were in the same place at the time.

The further difficulty, in verse 19 of St. John, where it is said the *High-priest* therefore asked Jesus—now Caiphas was the High-priest—is explained thus. This points back to the statement, in verse 13, that Jesus was brought to Annas first; and, further, Annas was the ex-High-priest, and was the chief member of the Sanhedrim, and had, therefore, a higher right to that title than had the other members of the Council; and the other members, the heads of the priestly families, were sometimes designated by the title *αρχιερεῖς*, High-priest, as Annas is here. Besides this, St. Luke, in his Gospel, (iii. 2), as well as in the Acts of the Apostles, places him before Caiphas. To keep matters clearly before the mind, I may here repeat that the following three facts are given as having happened in the house of Annas :—

1. St. Peter denies the first time. 2. Christ is interrogated concerning His disciples and His doctrine. 3. He receives a blow on the face by the servant of the High-priest.

After this digression, we may now return to consider the events in their order. And first, as to the course or route taken from the Garden of Olives to the tribunals of the High-priests.

The journey or route is thus described by Baring Gould : \*—  
 “You know that the Garden of Gethsemani lay on the last slope of the Hill of Olives, almost immediately over against the Temple, that occupies the rocky platform on the top of Mount Moriah. The situation of the different parts of Jerusalem may be roughly likened to a right-hand glove with a thumb sheath, but with all the rest of the fingers together, as in some old knitted gloves and

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\* “Trials of Jesus,” Lect. I.

in those of children. Now, suppose the Temple to occupy the place where comes the main joint of the thumb when the gloved hand is held out flat, then the old town of Jerusalem occupies the back of the hand, and further to the wrist the new town of Bezetha. Where the fingers are, there was Mount Zion, and the palace of Herod stood at the main joint of the little finger. A deep ravine, called the Tyropœon Valley, represents the cleft between the thumb and forefinger, and a sort of spur of hill running from Moriah, and called Ophel, is represented by the thumb. Now, the servants and soldiers would not take Jesus, when bound, up the steep ascent by which He and His disciples had descended, because that led to the town where the common people lived. They would lead Him away to Zion, where were the palaces of the great folk, Herod and the High-priest and Annas.

“To reach this part of the town, the band of those who held Jesus moved down the valley Kedron, along the path on the east side of the brook, till they reached the bridge near Absalom’s pillar, which crosses the torrent by a picturesque arch about twenty feet high. From the bridge the road winds up the hill Ophel, which was occupied by the house of the Nethinim, or inferior servants of the Temple (Nehemias iii. 36). Then they passed through the dung-gate at the lowest point reached by the city wall, in the glen of Tyropœon, which there opens to Siloam. This is the traditional course taken, and it is that which appears most probable. From this gate flights of steps led up to Zion (Nehemias, iii. 15 & xii. 37). At the fountain gate, says Nehemias, that is the gate leading to the pool of Siloam: *They went up by the stairs of the city of David at the going up of the wall.*

“Up the flight of steps, in the steep side of Zion, Jesus, the Son of David, was conveyed into the city of David.”

*Jesus is Examined before Annas.*—It is certain from St. John’s Gospel that there was a kind of trial conducted before and by Annas.

Annas and Caiphas were alternately and successively High-priests. The former was fulfilling that office at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, and again after the death of Christ. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles (iv. 6) it is said: *And Annas, the High-priest, asked (Peter and John) by what power, or in what name, have you done this?*

The latter, namely, Caiphas, was the High-priest of that year when Lazarus was raised from the dead, and on account of which miracle many of the Jews believed in Christ, and he is also the High-priest during the Passion, as it was he who gave the advice that *one man should die for the people*.

Annas was an old man, and a celebrated High-priest, who even when out of office had much authority attached to his opinion by the Sanhedrim. This was one of the reasons why our Saviour was brought first to him. There never was a person who for a longer period, and with a more influential sway, exercised the duties in connection with the priestly office than this Annas. He had been himself High-priest for upwards of twenty years, and no fewer than five of his sons, and his son-in-law, Caiphas, successively held this office, so that he could scarcely fail to be regarded as a sort of perpetual High-priest; so far indeed as administration was concerned, the virtual High-priest, whether he was actually in the office or not.\* This sufficiently explains why he should have been called High-priest by St. Luke, and why so prominent a share should have been ascribed to him in the history of the Passion. Other reasons are also assigned for bringing our Saviour to Annas, namely, that it was as a mark of respect paid to him, to show that their plans for the capture of our Saviour succeeded, and to satisfy his wish to see our Saviour, and to cross-examine Him in person. Some say that our Saviour was led past the house of Annas on His way to that of Caiphas.

There is one view of this incident taken by a German author †

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\* See Imperial Bible Dict. † Steinmeyer, "The History of the Passion."

that ought not to be omitted. He says that it is probable that even in the priestly family the destruction of Christ had been a subject of consideration. The resolution adopted of putting Him to death is to be traced back to the influence of Annas, whose age and experience placed him at the head of the priestly class. The judgment of Caiphas—*it is right that one man should die for the people*—embodied the views of his father-in-law. There was a kind of preliminary process to be gone through before the formal judgment, and Annas was the most fitting person to conduct it. It was not, therefore, merely out of respect or curiosity that Christ was brought before Annas, but for some sort of preliminary investigation required by the law, and the questions asked by Annas were concessions to the forms of law.

The High-priest interrogated Jesus about His disciples and His doctrines.

First, as to His disciples—why He had gathered them together? or, believing Him to be an extraordinary man, he might have thought, as Fr. Stanihurst, S.J., expresses it,\* that He should have selected His followers either from amongst the Stoics of Zeno, or the Peripatetics of Aristotle, or the Academicians of Plato, or from amongst the great orators of Athens. Why was it, on the contrary, He had chosen men who were rude, uncultured, and ignorant of all the sciences—of a low and abject condition of life? He appears as the founder of a new religion, with twelve fishermen instead of twelve Patriarchs, and seventy-two poor disciples instead of seventy-two Seniors of the Old Law.

What a lesson for those who belong to the schools of learning in the world! So many years and so much labour spent in acquiring profane knowledge, and so little time and labour given by students to the school of Christ! And we know that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. We may here say with the pious Thomas à Kempis: “O God, who art the Truth, make me one

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\* *Dei immortalis in mortali corpore patientis Historia.*

with Thee in everlasting love. I am often wearied with reading and hearing many things ; in Thee is all that I will or desire. Let all teachers hold their peace ; let all creatures keep silence ; speak to me Thou alone" (Bk. 1, c. 3).

The High-priest asks Christ about His doctrine. The doctrine of Christ must have been perfectly well known to him, as it was to the Chief-priests and Scribes and Pharisees. Christ was preaching and teaching openly and everywhere in Judea for the last three years, and the High-priest must have heard of the doctrine of Christ ; yet his question is an interesting and an instructive one, the doctrine of Christ was so strange and so much at variance with the traditions and practices of the Jews.

How many there are always seeking after profane knowledge, and how few inquire sincerely into the doctrine of Christ. The author above quoted on this point reminds us that philosophers ask about the doctrine of Porphyry and Aristotle ; physicians ask concerning the doctrine of Galen and Hypocritus ; mathematicians about Euclid and Archimedes, &c. ; but how few consider or care about the doctrine or science of which Thomas à Kempis thus speaks : " Indeed, a humble peasant who serves God, is better than a proud philosopher who, neglecting Him, considers the course of the heavens ; " \* and in another place he asks : "*Quid prodest alta de Trinitate disputare, si careas humilitate unde displiceas Trinitati*"—"What will it profit to discourse sublimely of the Trinity, if you are wanting in humility, whence you displease the Trinity."

The doctrine of Christ, after His three years teaching and preaching, must have been well known. A few of His sayings will remind us of that doctrine :—

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom. Love your enemies, and pray for those who calumniate and persecute you. He who humbles himself shall be exalted, and he who exalts himself*

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\* "Imit. of Christ," Bk. 1, c. 2



*shall be humbled. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

This is the doctrine taught by Christ, and in the schools of eternal wisdom, and the knowledge of which was prayed for by holy David, when he said : *Teach me to do thy will, because thou art my God.\**

Jesus answers Annas concerning His doctrine : *I have spoken openly to the world, &c.* We may represent Christ standing bound as a criminal before the High-priest, and yet His freedom in answering, and His authority in speaking are manifest. What weight and confidence in His words ! Secure, without concern, and intrepid, without fear, He speaks of His doctrine as firm, solid, certain, true and divine. He desired those to be the censors of His doctrine who were at anytime His hearers. He had said to them, on a former occasion : *Which of you can convince me of sin ?* And now, in regard to His doctrine, He tells the High-priest to ask, not His Blessed Mother, or His disciples, or His relations or friends, but His enemies. *Ask those who have heard me ;* as if He would say : “Ask Judas, who sold and betrayed me ; ask the Chief-priests, who bought me ; the satellites, who have taken me prisoner. Ask my enemies ; they, and all, know what I have said, for I have spoken openly to the world.”

Jesus receives a blow. *And when he had said these things, one of the assistants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying : Answerest thou the High-priest so.*

It is not certain whether the hand that gave that blow was covered with a gauntlet or not. Isaïas mentions most of the insults offered to our Saviour during His Passion ; and amongst them the blows and spittle cast upon His countenance appear the most opprobrious and shameful. Some pious authors have written that Jesus fell to the ground on receiving this blow, and the blood

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\* Ps. cxlii

gushed forth from His mouth and nostrils, and fell in drops on the ground, so as to purple the pavement.

It may be supposed that this servant intended more than to indulge the promptings of his rude and cruel nature. He expected some reward or acknowledgment for thus having taken upon himself to vindicate the respect due to the High-priest. We do not read that he is either corrected or reproved by Annas.

“In this blow,” says Ludolph, “was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremias :\* *He shall give His cheek to him that striketh him.* Our long-suffering and patient Lord rendereth not evil for evil, but endured this affront, like many others which follow, with perfect patience and meekness for our sakes, and taught us patience, answering modestly, humbly, with an unmoved countenance and a low voice, showing the truth of what He said, and gently and charitably rebuking the servant, on whom by His mere command He could have inflicted any punishment. *If, He said, I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil, and prove me a liar ; but if well, and thou hast nothing to find fault with, why strikest thou me unjustly ?* What can be more true, more gentle, and more just than this answer ?”

Whilst we condemn the servant of the High-priest, and cry out for fire to come down from heaven to consume him, or for the earth to open under his feet, that he may go down alive into hell, let us not forget our own blows—that, however calm and mild we may appear before men, we have struck our Saviour’s face, and given Him blow after blow, as often as we have offended Him by sin.

The meek reply of our Saviour is an unanswerable dilemma. It was given, in the first place, in self-justification, to show that no one could say that He had spoken inconsiderately, or without attention and respect. Secondly, for our instruction, to teach us that we can in justice, and without fear, refute calumnies, but with

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\* Jer., Lament. iii. 30.

meekness and respect. Thirdly, it is spoken to the confusion of His enemies ; for, as His innocence, His patience, and His wisdom appear, so their cruelty, injustice, and violence become more manifest.

St. Augustine proposes the question : “ Wherefore He did not offer the other cheek, as He had taught ? ” And the holy doctor’s answer is : “ That not only was He ready to give the other cheek to him who had struck Him, but to give His whole body also, that it might be nailed to the cross. But He teaches us here that those commandments of evangelical and perfect patience are not so much to be fulfilled by a vain, outward, bodily ostentation, as by the humble preparation of the heart within us, for it may easily happen that he who offers the other cheek may do it in a very angry frame of mind, when it would be much better that he should have answered the truth in sincerity, with calmness, and be ready with a quiet mind to suffer still greater injuries.” \*

How appropriately we may apply to our Saviour at this time the responses of the Church in the Tenebrae Office of Good Friday !

“ All my friends have forsaken me, and they that lay in ambush for me prevailed. He whom I loved has betrayed me. And they, with terrible looks, striking me with a cruel wound, gave me vinegar to drink. They cast me out among the wicked, and spared not my life. And they, with terrible looks, striking me,” &c.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### JESUS BEFORE CAIPHAS.

*He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearers, and he shall not open his mouth (Isa. liii. 7).*

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\* Tract. cxiii. in pan.

These words of Isaias are clearly verified in the portion of our Saviour's Passion which we have to consider now.

(Mt.) *But they, holding Jesus, led him to Caiphas, the High-priest, where the Scribes and the Ancients were assembled. And Peter followed him afar off, even to the court of the High-priest; and going in, he sat with the servants, that he might see the end. And the Chief-priests, and the whole council, sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in. And last of all, there came two false witnesses, and they said: This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it. And the High-priest, rising up, said to him: Answerest thou nothing to the things that these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the High-priest said to him: I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the High priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy; what think you? But they, answering, said: He is guilty of death.*

It was late at night when these things happened. The Chief-priests and the members of the Council retired to their homes, with the understanding that they were to meet again early in the morning. In the meantime, Christ, during the night, was left in the hands of the soldiers and the ministers of the Jews.

(L.) *And the men that held him, mocked him, and struck him, and they blindfolded him and smote his face. And they asked him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck thee? (Mt.) Then they did spit in his face, and buffeted him. (L.) And, blaspheming, many other things they said against him. In the morning early, Caiphas, who the night before had examined and condemned our Saviour, convoked a full and special Council meeting, that Christ might be*

condemned formally by the judgment of the whole Sanhedrim, and after that be delivered to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. At this meeting the trial and condemnation of Christ was repeated as on the previous night. It is thus narrated : (L.) *And as soon as it was day, the Ancients of the people, and the Chief-priests and the Scribes, came together ; and they brought him into their Council, saying : If thou be the Christ, tell us. And he saith to them : If I shall tell you, you will not believe me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go. But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all : Art thou the Son of God ? Who said : You say that I am. And they said : What need we any farther testimony ? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth. And the whole multitude of them, rising up, led him to Pilate.*

*The Council of the Jews.*—This was the Council of the Sanhedrim, composed, as I have explained in a former chapter, of the 70 Ancients, with the High-priest as its president on this occasion. The chief office of this Council was to judge and give sentence in all matters either directly or indirectly connected with the law of God.

This Council, according to the Gospel, was called together three times to receive and judge of questions that concerned our Blessed Lord.

The first time was when Jesus was born. King Herod called together all the Chief-priests and the Scribes of the people, and enquired of them where Christ should be born (Matt. ii. 1-4).

The second was the time of the resurrection of Lazarus, when : *The Chief-priests and the Pharisees gathered a Council, and said : What do we, for this man doth many wonders ?* (John xi. 47).

The third time recorded was that which is narrated above : *And when morning was come, all the Chief-priests and Ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put him to death.*

Some have thought that it was a meeting of the Sanhedrim that was held, when *the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to him, to ask him*, (John) *Who art thou?* (St. John i. 19).

In the first of those meetings, the Council was still under the divine guidance and assistance, and it answered truly the question proposed, namely, where Christ was to be born? It gave the answer: *In Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the prophets.*

At the second recorded meeting, the Spirit of God was passing away from it, and it answered, decreeing the death of Christ: *It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.* This sentence of the Council was false and wrong in adjudging the innocent to death, but against human designs it was divinely true that *one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish*, inasmuch as Christ should die for the salvation of all mankind.

It is the more common opinion that in the Old Law the judgment of this tribunal was infallible in faith and morals, through the divine assistance granted to it for the time of the Old Dispensation, and until the coming of Christ. God Himself referred those who disputed in the inferior tribunals to this supreme tribunal, and ordered, under the penalty of death, that its judgments should be obeyed. If this were fallible, there would be no stable, certain, or secure safeguard for that old and divine religion of the Jews. Now, however, in the time of Christ, the Old Law was passing away, and the Spirit of God was departing from its teachers, and this Council ceased to have any power or divine right whatever at the time it pronounced sentence of death against Christ. *Reus est mortis*—He is guilty of death.

*The President of the Council.*—This was the High-priest. If in full pontifical attire, we can represent him as vested in the manner described in the 28th chapter of the Book of Exodus—with rational and ephod, a tunic and straight linen garments, a mitre and girdle; in gold, scarlet, violet and purple, with bells and



gems, &c. *They shall make the holy vestments for thy brother Aaron and his sons, that they may do the office of priesthood unto me* (Exod. xxviii. 4).

This was the High-priest, whose offices were—1. Once a year, namely, on the solemn day of expiation or propitiation, to enter the Sanctuary, or Holy of Holies, and there offer expiation for the whole people, and for all the stains of sin contracted during the year. 2. To consecrate the priests and levites according to the rite described in Exod. xxix, Levit. viii., and Numb. viii. 3. To be supreme judge of the law, and to pronounce sentence. 4. In weightier matters, and affairs of great importance, to consult with God so as to know His will, and be able to manifest it to the people.

*The False Witnesses.*—*They sought false witness against him (Jesus), and found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in.*

It was not testimony they wanted, but *false* testimony, for nothing else would have secured their purpose. Several of the Chief-priests and Scribes, who had been going in and out amongst the crowd, vie with each other in their eagerness to procure such witnesses. St. Matthew says that: *The Chief-priests and the whole Council sought false witness against Jesus;* and St. Mark tells us that a great number of them were found, *for many bore false witness against him, and their evidences were not agreeing.*

So that, looking back on the past three years, and Christ's doctrine and teaching, we can easily imagine some of the accusations.

One witness could testify that he had heard Jesus say that He would destroy the Temple, and in three days rebuild it, and make it more magnificent than it was in the days of Solomon.

Another could testify that Jesus taught in Samaria; that soon men would no longer worship in the Temple, but that the whole earth would be a temple both for Jews and Gentiles.

A third could testify that Jesus said that the day would come when not one stone should be left upon another of the Temple; that He had called it a "den of thieves;" the priests, "blind guides"

and “deceivers;” the Scribes, “foxes;” and the Pharisees, “hypocrites.”

Other witnesses did not agree, but contradicted each other. Thus we may suppose one asserting that Jesus called Himself the “Son of God;” and another asserting that he heard Him say He was the “Son of man;” and one could have said that he heard Christ say that He and the Father were one, while another could have testified that he heard Christ say that the Father was greater than He. *And their witnesses did not agree* (St. Mark).\*

It was notorious that our Lord transgressed the Sabbath law according to the Jewish conceptions of it. This was the first substantial ground for the hostility of the Pharisees to Him; yet we do not read that the Sanhedrim caused this accusation to be brought up now against Him, because they knew that Christ did not infringe on the Sabbath law except to work beneficial miracles, and it would be inconvenient to refer to His miracles now, on account of which so many, even members of the Council, believed in Him.

*Jesus autem tacebit—Jesus was silent.*—Such opposite testimony perplexed and irritated Caiphas, and confounded the Chief-priests and Scribes. They began to fear that Jesus would have to be released for want of testimony. All the while, Jesus had remained standing before the High-priest, bound, with His hands tied across His body, His countenance, mild but heroic, exhibiting the firmness and composure of innocence. His remarkable silence is emphasized by St. Mark: *But he held his peace, and answered nothing.*

Ludolph says that “Jesus was silent, and answered nothing, in order to show, first, His justice, for these men were unworthy, and what they said was false, and unworthy of an answer; secondly, His mercy, that they might not sin more by persisting in their malice; thirdly, His wisdom, for He knew, as God, that what-

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\* See a work entitled, “Prince of the House of David,” by Rev. J. H. Ingraham

ever reply he gave they would distort it into a calumny, and that words of excuse to which no one listened would be useless; fourthly, His patience, that He might set us the example of despising the words of calumniators, and being silent rather than defending ourselves without any good results."

*Caiphas adjures Christ to manifest Himself.*—He said to Him : *I adjure thee, by the living God, tell us if thou be Christ the Son of God.*

This adjuration is supposed to have been the so-called oath of the testimony, and every Jew was bound to answer truthfully when thus adjured.

They tried the false witnesses first, but as their concurrent testimony did not agree, they were obliged to come to the real motive on which to condemn Christ. The claim that He was the promised Messiah was the sole ground on which Christ was to be condemned, and the High-priest reluctantly had to admit it.

*Thou has said it*, answered Christ; and His outspoken reply enabled Caiphas to declare further testimony unnecessary. The High-priest cried out: *He hath blasphemed. You have heard the blasphemy; what think you?* *They all cried out: He is guilty of death.*

He was condemned on the ground that He was the Son of God, the promised Messiah. It was on this ground the Sanhedrim pronounced sentence of condemnation against Him, and St. Mark expresses their unanimity in that sentence, when he says: *They all condemned him to be guilty of death.* In this manner their plan was to succeed; and this, too, was in accordance with the design of redemption and the foreknowledge of God.

St. Mark also tells us that: *All the Priests and the Scribes and the Ancients assembled together* on this occasion. How strange and mysterious that they all could have come to the conclusion they did, considering the state of expectation in which Israel then was as to the coming Messiah. Their dislike or hatred of Christ could

not account entirely for their being unjust judges, and individuals of that Council, like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus,\* did not hate or dislike Christ. We cannot suppose for a moment that the members of that Council, or even a majority of them, pronounced the sentence, *He is guilty of death*, in perfect calmness of mind, and under the influence of complete conviction.

Caiphas and Annas, and some of the other members of the Council, might have abandoned the expectation of the coming Messias, or their ideas of Him were of such a nature as to make it appear to them that Christ's claim to be the Son of God was blasphemous. Yet, how could they all have forgotten the meeting held by that Council when the wise men came from the East, and the answer was then given that Christ would be born in Bethlehem? *For so it was written by the prophets*. How could they overlook the remarkable events of our Saviour's life fulfilling all their prophecies, and the extraordinary miracles by which He proved His divine power? These things made the Jews half believe and suspect that He was the Messias, as is evident from that occasion mentioned by St. John (x. 24), when they gathered round Him and said: *How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them: I speak to you, and you believe not; the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me. . . . I and the Father are one. The Jews then took up stones to stone him.*

Still, the number of them who believed in Him was always considerable, according to the testimony of the same Evangelist (xii. 42): *Many of the chief men also believed in him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue.*

Jesus now, at this solemn moment, tells them that He is the

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\* I have seen it stated that at the first trial of Jesus before Caiphas, not one of the Chief-priests voted *not guilty*. At the second trial, in the morning, Joseph of Arimathea registered his protest. Joseph was not present at the night audience. This, I think, cannot now amount to more than a supposition.

Messias. St. Matthew gives the answer as: *Thou hast said it.* But St. Mark gives us the sense in which that answer was made when he expresses it by the simple affirmative, *I am.*

This very testimony, borne by Jesus at a decisive moment, plain and simple as it was, contained a force of truth capable of banishing all doubts, and of strengthening faith wherever it existed. Yet, how did it come to pass that the whole Council, on the grounds of these very words, uttered the sentence: *He is guilty of death?*

St. Paul says (1 Cor. ii. 8) that the Jewish rulers did not know the hidden wisdom of God: *Which none of the princes of this world knew; for if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.*

They were blinded and hardened. Those who here sit in judgment upon Christ, are themselves the subject of a divine judgment; those who see are made blind, and they act under the influence of their blindness. This is the only key to unfold the mystery of the sentence passed by the Sanhedrim.\*

*Jesus that night in the hands of the Soldiers.*—We need not add to the words of the Evangelist, in his narrative of the injuries and insults to which our Lord was subjected by that vile rabble.

*Then did they spit in his face,* thus fulfilling the saying of Isaiah (l. 6): *I have not turned away my face from them that spit upon me.* It was the peculiarity of the Jews to show their contempt, reproach, and scorn for a person whom they wished to humiliate, and thus they spit in that face *on which the angels desire to look.*

(Mt.) *Others struck his face with the palms of their hands.* (M.) *And some began to cover his face.* (L.) *And they blindfolded him, and struck his face.* Their fathers and the prophets had long desired and sighed for the sight of that beautiful face, and these wretched men covered it up and blindfolded Him. V. Bede says: "They covered it up, not that He might not see their evil deeds, but

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\* See "History of the Passion," by Steinmeyer: "The trial of Jesus."

that they might hide His countenance and the grace of knowing Him from themselves."

(Mt.) *And others buffeted him.* Bede remarks on this, that "All false Christians, who confess Christ with their lips, but in their works deny Him, buffet Him, for (according to him) a buffet is given from behind, and thus they buffet their Lord by flatteringly acknowledging Him with their mouth, but from behind, instead of following Him by a good life, they buffet Him by the contradiction of their evil deeds."

(Mt.) *Others struck his face with the palms of their hands.* St. Jerome says that "He chose to be struck with the open hand, in order that we might give praise to Him with our hands, that is, with our works and words."

And they said : (Mt.) *Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is it that struck thee?* Hence, Theophilus says that "the Master of the prophets was derided as a false prophet. And because they mocked Him in words, and made a laughing-stock of Him, He answered them nothing."

Ludolph says : "From this point, the scornful demand that our Lord should prophesy, we learn these lessons :—The first is, that we should not mock Christ, thinking that our evil deeds will not be seen by Him ; for, according to Bede, all those who provoke Him by bad actions, thinking meantime that their thoughts and works of darkness will not be seen by Him, say to Him, mockingly : *Who is it that struck thee?*

"The second is, that we should consider within ourselves whether we have ever struck Christ with the hand of a wicked deed ; and if we do not know whether such is the case, let us beg of our Lord with loving faith what the Jews demanded of Him derisively, namely, to prophesy to us, and teach us to know our faults.

"The third is, that we must take care not to tempt Christ by asking of Him any prophesy or any miracle, for St. Augustine says : 'The enemy seeks by many suggestions and machinations to in-



duce me to ask a sign. But I beseech Thee, O Lord, that as consent to his wiles is far from me, so the very thought of them may be ever removed further and further from me.'

"The fourth is, that the gift of God is not to be lavished on the unworthy, and that as Christ, though truly a prophet, would not prophesy to His scoffers, so teachers must have regard to time and place, and not bestow the word of God on the unworthy."\*

*The Second Trial of Jesus before Caiphas.*—On the morning of Good Friday, as soon as it was day, the Ancients and the Scribes came together.

What was that day? Never was there a day such as that. It was truly the great day which the Lord had made. The day of the greatest sorrow for Christ, but of the greatest joy to the world. A day of joyful tidings to men, who were still strangers here on earth; to the captive souls in Limbo; and to the blessed spirits in heaven. This was the day of salvation, more bright by the death of the Redeemer than by the light of the sun. It was the day which, before all days, and all time, and all ages, that the Immortal King of ages had destined from eternity in the catalogue of time as the most holy of all days; the most replete with hidden mysteries, and with the most wonderful prodigies and miracles—a day on which the world's redemption was to be effected by the death of the Son of God. This is the day towards which the Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, conceived in time of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, looked, and on seeing it He rejoiced. And as soon as it was this day, the Ancients of the people and the Chief-priests and Scribes came together, and they brought Him into the Council, saying: *If thou be the Christ, tell us.* Then our Saviour answered them as in the text: *If I shall tell you, you will not believe, &c.*

As if He had said: "If I tell you, ye will not believe; if I prove it to you from the Prophets and by my works, ye will not

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\* "Hours of the Passion," p. 117.

listen ; if I say that I am Christ, ye will not then acknowledge me and let me go ; I have spoken openly to the world, in the Temple and in the Synagogue. I have concealed nothing. Ask them who have heard what I have said. Nevertheless, I say unto you, what I have before taught, that I am the Christ, the Son of God, and that hereafter ye shall behold me sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

*Then said they all: Art thou the Son of God? Who said: You say that I am. And they said: What need we any further testimony, for we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth. And the whole multitude of them, rising up, led him to Pilate.*

Thus concludes the trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrim, and by His own people, the Jews.

This trial is commemorated in the morning office of Good Friday, by a tract taken from the 139th Psalm, in which the Church represents our Redeemer, who has been betrayed into the hands of His enemies, praying to His Eternal Father.

"Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man : rescue me from the unjust man.

"Who have devised iniquities in their hearts : all the day long they designed battle.

"They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent : the venom of asps is under their lips.

"Keep me, O Lord, from the hand of the wicked : and from unjust men deliver me.

"Who have proposed to supplant my steps : the proud have hid a net for me.

"And they have stretched out cords for a snare : they have laid for me a stumbling-block by the way-side.

"I said to the Lord, thou art my God : hear, O Lord, the voice of my supplication.

"O Lord, Lord, the might of my salvation : cover thou my head in the day of battle.

“Give me not up, O Lord, from my desire to the wicked : they have plotted against me ; do not thou forsake me, lest they should triumph.

“The head of them : compassing me about the labour of their lips shall overwhelm them.

“But as for the just, they shall give glory to thy name, and the upright shall dwell with thy countenance.\*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE DENIAL BY ST. PETER.

WHILST our Lord was being interrogated by Caiphas, whilst He was being struck with blows and treated with insults, as related in the preceding chapter, St. Peter was denying Him in the hall of the High-priest.

We have already mentioned the first denial as having taken place when our Lord was before Annas. The two other denials took place in the house of Caiphas, after the manner narrated by the Evangelists.

Peter having entered the hall of the High-priest, (J.) *was standing and warming himself* with the servants, pretending he was one of those who had come there through curiosity, and fearing at the same time he might be detected by those around. Whilst he was standing and warming himself at the fire in the hall : (J.) *They said to him : Art not thou one of his disciples ?* (Mt., M. & L.). *And another maid saw him, and she saith to them who were there : This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth.* Peter denied, and said : *I am not.* According to St. Matthew he denied with an oath, and swore that *he knew not the man.* This was the second denial of St. Peter.

\* Translation from the “Liturgical Year.”

SS. Matthew and Mark say : *After a little while* ; and St. Luke says : *After the space as it were of an hour*, (J.) *one of the servants of the High-priest (a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off) saith to him : Did not I see thee in the garden with him ?* (L.) At the same time, *another certain man affirmed, saying : Of a truth, this man was also with him ; for he is also a Galilean.* (Mt.) *And they came that stood by, and said to Peter : Surely, thou also art one of them ; for even thy speech doth discover thee.* Then Peter (M.) *began to curse and swear, saying : I know not the man of whom you speak. And immediately the cock crew again.* (L.) *And the Lord, turning, looked at Peter.* (M.) *And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said unto him.* (Mt.) *And going forth, he wept bitterly.*

We have now to consider the circumstances of this denial, and the lessons to be drawn from the example of St. Peter, in his fall and in his repentance.

First of all, we have to consider the place in which St. Peter denied Christ, and its surroundings.

It was in the hall of the High-priest ; and according to the order I have followed, the first denial was in the house of Annas, and to that first denial I now refer in conjunction with the other two denials, which certainly took place in the hall of Caiphas.

The description of the hall of the High-priest may be taken from Baring Gould, who supposes with great probability that the palace occupied by Caiphas was built after the Roman style : “ There was what was called the *vestibulum*, an entrance adorned with pillars ; in this was the *ostium*, or entrance hall, closed with doors. On one side lived the porter. This hall gave admission to the *atrium*, called in a Greek house the *auli*, a square or oblong apartment, open in the middle to the sky, with, in Roman houses, a small water-tank in the middle, and beside it the image of the tutelary god, and a small stone altar, on which incense was burnt. At the further end of the hall was a large handsome room called the *tablinum*. It was the grand reception room, and was richly

adorned. In the *tablinum*, which was sometimes square, sometimes semi-circular, the court was held in the house of Caiphas. Without, below the marble steps, in the *atrium*, were the servants of the house. There was no image of a god there, but there was a brazier in the place of the altar of incense.

"In the *tablinum* were also seats or benches of marble, of alabaster, or of costly wood ; on these benches sat the Council. Whilst the trial was going on in the *tablinum*, another trial was going on in the *atrium*, a step or two below the *tablinum*. The Master was tried in the upper court, and found guilty, though innocent. The disciple was tried in the lower court, and found guilty by his own conscience, or rather, let me say, by that Master who was receiving sentence a few steps above him." The same author adds : " Both were irradiated by the red light of the fire in the midst of the prevailing darkness. Probably, the only lights then burning were the fire of charcoal in the brazier on the edge of the water-tank, and the torches held aloft before Jesus by the soldiers of the guard.

"Very generally the *tablinum* opened into a garden behind, so that those in the *atrium*, or hall, looked through it into the garden, which was surrounded by a colonnade. . . . Now, perhaps, you can picture the scene. In the foreground are the servants and soldiers moving about the hall, women bringing bundles of thorn or shovels of charcoal to the fire in the brazier. Beyond, raised like a low stage of a theatre, is the *tablinum*, with the judges seated on the right. On the left, peering out of the dark door, are the evil faces of the hired spies and witnesses. A little forward, on a small raised platform, is Christ, with bound hands, and on either side stands an officer holding a flaring torch. Behind, like the scene in a theatre, is the garden, with the setting moon casting long shadows from the black cypresses over the gravel, and high aloft in the sky twinkles one star." \*

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\* "Trials of Jesus." I give this long extract as vividly representing the scene in the hall of Caiphas.

Secondly, in regard to St. Peter himself. It is necessary to consider his position in order to understand the nature of his fall, and the pain his denial must have given to the loving heart of his divine Master.

Peter was the son of Jona, and he was first known as Simon Bar-Jona. He was a native of Galilee, and by trade or employment a fisherman.

He was first brought by his brother Andrew to Jesus. And when Jesus saw him, He said : *Thou art Simon, son of Jona ; thou wilt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter\** (or a rock). Andrew was Christ's disciple before Peter, but Peter was first called to the Apostolate. The vocation to the Apostolate is narrated by St. Matthew.† *And having called the twelve disciples together, he gave them power. . . . And the names of the twelve Apostles are these : the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother.* He was thus raised by Christ not only to the dignity of an Apostle, but placed at the head of the college of the Apostles, and, as such, he received the great privileges and prerogatives by which he was afterwards constituted, and exercised the duties of Christ's Vicar upon earth.

Christ had already promised him the supremacy over His Church, and also the gift of infallibility. He had changed his name from Simon to Cephas, or Peter, which means a rock.

As narrated in St. Matthew's Gospel,‡ after St. Peter, in the name of the others, had made a profession of faith in His Divinity, saying, *Thou art Christ, the son of the living God*, our Lord said to him : *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her. . . . And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.*

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\* St. John, i. 42. † St. Matt. x. 1, 2. ‡ St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19.



In His discourse to them at the Last Supper, Christ addressed the following words to St. Peter: *Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.\**

These two promises he had already received from Christ, and after the resurrection he obtained the prerogatives here promised when our Lord commissioned him to feed his flock by the words: *Feed my lambs, feed my sheep* (St. John, xxi. 17).

Thus, when Peter had professed his faith in Christ, the supremacy over the Church was promised to him. He was the rock on which the Church was to be built, and against which the gates of hell would never prevail. Again, the promise of supremacy and infallibility was confirmed when Christ said He would pray for him that his faith might not fail, and that he being converted would have to confirm his brethren. And finally, when after the resurrection St. Peter had professed and proved his love for Christ, then it was that these powers were conferred upon him.

Christ also had given him the power of the keys implicitly when He said, in St. Matthew's Gospel: † *I do not say to thee seven times, but seventy times seven times*; and explicitly that power was conferred upon him and upon the others after Christ's resurrection, when He said to them: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained.‡*

In regard to St. Peter, Christ predicted two things: 1st, his denial; and, 2nd, his martyrdom.

Our Saviour told him of his denial first at the Last Supper, when He said: *I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me.§* And again, on the way to the Mount of Olives, He said: *In this night before the cock crow thou wilt deny me thrice.||*

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\* St. Luke, xxii. 31, 32. † St. Matt. xviii. 22. ‡ St. John, xx. 22.

§ St. Luke, xxii. 34. || St. Matt. xxvi. 34.

His martyrdom was also predicted by our Saviour: That same St. Peter was to give his life for his divine Master.

It was this our Saviour signified when he said to him: *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me hereafter.\** And when after the resurrection He told him: *When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and lead whither thou wouldst not. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God.†*

We now come to consider the fall of this Apostle—one who had received such a vocation from God, and who was destined to be the head of Christ's Church on earth.

The Gospel narrative tells us how the denial happened, and how St. Peter fell:—

1st. *The maid that was portress said to Peter: Art not thou one of this man's disciples? He said: I am not.‡*

2nd. *And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, that I know not the man.§*

3rd. *And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them, for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man, and immediately the cock crew.||*

This is the brief account of the three-fold denial, and no matter how commentators arrange them, it is quite sufficient for our purpose to know that the denial of St. Peter was a painful feature of the Passion of Jesus, which was concerned with His trials before the rulers of the people.

St. Peter, by his thrice-repeated protestations and denials, becomes guilty of the following sins:—1. A lie. 2. Perjury, by way of execration. 3. Infidelity, at least material infidelity. Peter

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\* John. xiii. 36. † Ibid. xxi. 18. ‡ Ibid. xviii. 17. § St. Matt. xxvi. 71.  
|| Ibid. xxvi. 73.

did not lose his faith; for, although in his heart he firmly believed in Christ, he nevertheless denied Him in word. 4. Scandal, by the bad example he gave the others.

Thus he fell, who was the head of the college of the Apostles; who had received so many favours from Christ, and who had so often professed his faith in, and love for, this divine Master, and who, a short time before, had protested, saying: *Even though all should abandon thee, yet will I never abandon thee*; and that he was ready to die for Him, or to go with Him even to death—he who was to be Christ's Vicar on earth, and the supreme bishop over His Church.

“‘Thou art one of the Nazarene's followers,’ cried the voice of a maid who brought wood to feed the fire. ‘Thou needst not deny it. I am of Galilee, and knew thee when thou wert a fisherman.’ Then Peter denied, saying he knew not the man. Another may be represented as saying: ‘Thy speech betrayeth thee, now that thou hast spoken. Thou art a Galilean, and thy name is Simon Bar-Jona, and I remember how that three years ago you and your brother Andrew left your nets to follow the Nazarene.’” \*

Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man.

The author of the “House of David” thus describes his sudden repentance: “Then Peter cast his looks towards the place where Jesus was. He caught his Master's eyes bent upon him with a tender and reproving gaze, so full of sorrowing compassion, mingled with forgiveness. He started as if struck by lightning. He then pressed his two hands to his face, and, uttering a cry of anguish and despair which made the High-priest look, and which went to every heart, he rushed out by the open door into the darkness and disappeared.”

As he did so the cock crew a second time, and thus were verified the words of our Saviour spoken to St. Peter: *Before the cock*

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\* See “Prince of the House of David,” by Ingraham.

*crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.* And the Lord turning, beheld Peter. And Peter remembered the words which the Lord had spoken to him, and *going forth, he wept bitterly.*

The very instant that Christ looked at him, he was converted. He who had fallen, stood once more. He wept for his sin. That look breathed into him the spirit of a new life, and he that was dead by his denial, was restored to life through repentance.

There is no necessity for chains or scourges in Peter's case ; nor for prisons and persecutions, which he afterwards endured ; nor for fastings or hair-shirts—the look of Christ was sufficient to make that heart penitent, and restore Peter to His former friendship and love.

The author already quoted describes Peter following afar off : “ His tall, spare figure might have been seen that night (after the arrest in the garden) passing along the streets of Jerusalem ; pressing eagerly on, at a rapid pace, ready even to die with Him if necessary.” Yet his fall and his denial happened very soon after. And as Joab pierced with three lances the heart of Absalom, so the heart of Jesus was transfixed by the three-fold denial of St. Peter.

Let us now reflect upon the three denials separately. As to the first denial, a woman is the occasion of it. Fr. Stanihurst here applies the saying : *Dux femina facti.* Even though a man be elevated over many, and be favoured with the greatest of gifts, let him take to heart the warning : *Cave ab ancilla.* At the voice of the maid-servant Peter fell. He was not molested by the soldiers ; he was not interrogated by the Council, or by any of the Chief-priests, or by Pilate or Herod ; but he was not able to escape the curiosity of the maid-servant. This fall is more surprising than the fall of Holofernes. He was insensible and asleep when he was decapitated by Judith. Peter is sober and awake. As it was said of old : *One woman hath made confusion in the house of King Nabuchodonosor, for behold Holofernes lieth upon the ground,*

and his head is not upon him (Judith, xiv. 16) ; so in this place it may be said : "One Hebrew woman brings confusion into the household of Christ." And Peter, in denying Christ, falls into spiritual death, and is cut off from his head, who is Christ.

"Woman," says Fr. Stanihurst, "whom God had made to be a help to man, has been to his ruin. Think of Peter, and, before him, of Adam, Samson, and Solomon. A woman is able to confute Cicero and all his philippics ; to confound Aristotle and all his arguments ; Porphyry, and his dilemmas and enthymemas. The same may be said of even holy men and of high ecclesiastics, according to the testimony of St. Augustine. It was a woman who brought sin and confusion into the earthly paradise ; into the house of David ; into the Kingdom of Solomon, and now into the college of the Apostles.

We must not, however, forget all we owe to that second Eve who stood by the cross of Jesus ; and on hearing His dying words, *Woman, behold thy son*, received us as her children. She is our comfort, our help, and our most powerful advocate, to whom no one has recourse in vain. She was called by the angels, *Blessed amongst all women*.

The second and third denials of St. Peter remind us how a man falls from one sin into another. First he denies, and then he re-denies.

It is true that before Christ is explicitly denied, many of the virtues of which He is the teacher are first denied.

The innocent youth who enters the academy or public school, begins, before his downfall, to deny one virtue after another, until at length he denies Christ. Thus purity is denied, justice is denied, charity is denied, and at length Christ and His teaching are denied.

Those who deny Christ here, we are reminded, will be denied by Him hereafter. After death the divine justice will say to the impure : *I know not this man*. The divine mercy will say to the

angry and proud: *I know not the man*. And thus all the virtues will answer, and the gates of heaven will be closed, and those excluded may cry out: *Lord, Lord, open to us*; but the justice of God will give only one answer throughout eternity: *Nescio vos: I know you not*.

Many confess Christ by their words, and deny Him by their works. They say with Peter: *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*; and by their deeds they say: *I know not the man*.

When you love anything more than Him who is the supreme Good, you deny that you know His goodness. When you murmur and complain of crosses, trials and sufferings that come to you from the hands of God, you deny that you know His providence. When you continue in sin, and fear not His punishment, you deny that you know His justice. When with bold audacity you continue to sin in His sight, you deny His power.

When, therefore, you deny that this Man, who is infinite in all his perfections, is provident, good, just and powerful, you say with Peter: *I know not this man*.

Especially I may say that Christ is denied, if not in word, at least by act, by irreverence in Church and before the Blessed Sacrament. Although we believe in this mystery, and are ready to die for it, yet how often do not our acts amount to a denial of its truth. The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands and deeds are those of Esau.

Lord, rather than deny Thee, grant us to be able to say always with a lively faith, for which we are ready to lay down our lives: *Tu es Christus, filius Dei vivi: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*.

*St. Peter's Tears and Repentance*.—When Jesus turned and looked at Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly, his denial was forgiven, and Peter was restored to the place he had forfeited in the friendship of His Master—to the place which Christ had destined for him from the first. With the look of Christ, and the



repentance of Peter, the matter was at an end, and no further effect of his misdeed is anywhere to be found. His conduct on Easter Sunday morning, and during the days which follow, as well as during his whole life afterwards, proves how true and heartfelt was his repentance.

The author of the "Holy Court," speaking of St. Peter's tears, says: "Thou who didst defy the gates of hell, hast yielded thyself to the voice of a simple woman. All the conquests thou didst promise thyself are become the trophies of a weak mind. Return to the combat, and triumph over thyself."

St. Peter was ever afterwards afraid even to behold the place of his fall. His repentance was so great, that tears of sorrow furrowed his cheeks; he could never hear the cock crow without shedding tears. "He had walked on the sea to Jesus, and now he returns by his tears to Him. He seems to say: 'I will speak now only by my tears, since I have lately talked so wickedly by my mouth; since that which should open to speak oracles to the Church has been employed to commit foul treason. I will from henceforth be a perpetual example to the Church by my fall, and rising again from death, and for the comfort of sinners; and the fault of one night-time shall be lamented by me all the days of my life.'"

*The Despair of Judas.*—According to the usual harmony of the Gospels, mention is here made of Judas once more, and the narrative is given of his despair and suicide, in the words of St. Matthew.

(Mt.) *Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief-priests and Ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it.*

*And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed, and went and hanged himself with an halter.*

*But the Chief-priests, having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is*

*not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood. And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for strangers. For this cause that field was called haceldama, that is, the field of blood, even to this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was prized, whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me.\**

As I have already treated the case of Judas in a former chapter, I need only refer in this place to one or two things in the above narrative.

*The Corbona.*—This was the treasury of the Temple. *Corban* is the Hebrew term for a gift or offering made to God. The gifts offered to God in the Temple were put into the *Corbona*. The Jews scrupled to deposit the money returned by Judas in the Temple treasury, because it had been the price of blood, and as such was esteemed impure. St. Jerome remarks how the Jews in this were straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel. They would not put the money into the *Corbona* because it was the price of blood, and they scrupled not to shed the blood of the innocent.

*Haceldama*, the field of blood, which was the potter's field.—This is a small field lying south of Jerusalem, which the priests purchased with the thirty pieces of silver that Judas received as the price of our Saviour's blood. Pretending that it was not lawful to apply this money to sacred uses, because it was the price of blood, they purchased with it the potter's field to be the burial-place of strangers. We read in the Mishna that they did not allow malefactors, or such as were executed, to be buried in the tombs of their fathers, except their flesh had been first consumed in other places appointed as the punishment of such offenders.

St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, had part of the field

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\* Zach. xi. 12.

covered in, for the purpose of receiving the dead, and it was formerly thought that such was the sarcophagous virtue in the earth, that the bodies were consumed within the space of two or three days.

It is now used as the sepulchre of the Armenians, who have a magnificent convent on Mount Zion.

The mystical meaning of the purchase of this field for the burial of strangers with the price of blood, according to Ludolph, is: "That Christ has, by His blood, bought for us, strangers, perpetual rest and the joys of Paradise. And so we read in the Gloss on this subject: 'A great mystery underlies these works of wickedness. The potter is God, in whose power it is to make out of the same clay *one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour*. The field is the whole world, which is bought with the price of His blood, so that strangers may be buried there, not Israelites, but aliens, who, being dead with Him and buried in the price of His blood, have obtained everlasting rest.'

"St. Jerome says: 'We, therefore, who were strangers to the law and the prophets, have received for our salvation the evil designs of the Jews, and repose in the price of the blood of Christ.' St. Augustine also says: 'A rest, I say, is prepared in the blood of Christ for strangers, who are cast out as exiles, homeless, and without a country throughout the world. And by these strangers we mean those devout Christians who, renouncing the world and possessing nothing in it, find rest in the blood of Christ'" ("Hours of the Passion").

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## CHAPTER IX.

### CHRIST THE FIRST TIME BEFORE PILATE.

(J.) *Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the governor's hall, and it was morning.* (L.) *And the whole multitude then rising up, led him to Pilate.* (J.) Christ was introduced into the pretorium, or

hall, by the soldiers; *but they* (the Chief-priests and the Jews) *went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch.* Pilate, therefore, went out to them, and said: *What accusation bring you against this man?* They answered, and said to him: *If he were not a mischief-maker, we would not have delivered him up to thee.* Pilate, therefore, said to them: *Take him you, and judge him according to your law.* The Jews, therefore, said to him: *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*

*They began therefore to accuse him; not as a violator of the law of Moses, which crime the Jews themselves could punish, or, at all events, it would not have much weight with the Roman Governor, but they accused Him of a crime which the Romans punished with great severity. They say, therefore: (L.) We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he was Christ the King.*

That is in their representation, that He said He was the promised Messiah, who would shake off the Roman yoke and reign a King in Judea.

Pilate, moved by their accusations, and especially by the last of them, entered the hall, that is the place from which he had come forth to the Jews, and where he had left Jesus in the custody of the soldiers. On entering the hall, he addressed Jesus, and said to Him: (J.) *Art thou the King of the Jews?* Jesus answered: *Sayest thou this of thyself, or have others told it thee of me?* Pilate answered: *Am I a Jew? Thy own nation, and the Chief-priests, have delivered thee up to me. What hast thou done?* Jesus answered: *My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence.* Pilate, therefore, said to him: *Art thou a king then?* Jesus answered: *Thou sayest that I am a king; for this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony of the truth. Every one who is of the truth, heareth my voice.* Pilate saith to him:

*What is truth? And when he said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them: I find no cause in him.*

When, therefore, Pilate came out again to the Jews, he had Jesus with him. (L.) *And he said to the Chief-priests and the multitude: I find no cause in this man.* That is, "I find no crime in His case for which he should be condemned to death."

The Jews, hearing this outside the hall, began more and more to accuse Jesus. Pilate, who with Jesus was on the platform of the hall, again asked him, saying: (M.) *Answerest thou nothing? Behold in how many things they accuse thee. But Jesus still answered nothing; so that Pilate wondered.* (L.) *But they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place. But Pilate, hearing Galilee, asked if the man were of Galilee. And when he understood that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in these days.*

We have in this portion of the history of the Passion mention made of the pagan governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate. He had so much to do with the Passion of Christ, that his name is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed.

His nationality is uncertain. Some say he was a Roman, or at least an Italian; others that he was a Frenchman; and others, with Theophylactus, say that he was born in Pontus.

For ten years he discharged the duties of Roman procurator in Judea. He was a man of fierce temper, and addicted to all manner of vices, so that, according to the historian, Philo, he caused sedition in the country against his government and authority. He was afterwards called to Rome to give an account of his administration, and of the charges made against him. He was found guilty, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment to Vienne, in France, where he put an end to his life by committing suicide.

There is some difference of opinion as to the meaning of the answer given by the Jews to Pilate: *It is not lawful for us to put*

*any man to death.* Some have thought that the power of life and death was taken away from the Jews by the Romans forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that would be in the very year of our Saviour's Passion. Others say that this power was taken away from them sixty years before the fall of Jerusalem, that is, at the time Judea was made a Roman province.

Against these opinions we have the fact that St. Stephen was ordered by the Jews to be stoned to death; and St. Paul, lest he might be subjected to a like penalty, had to appeal from the tribunal of the Jews to Cæsar. Besides, Philo, the Hebrew historian, testifies that Tiberius allowed the Hebrews the administration of their own laws.

The reason, therefore, according to Benedict XIV.\* why the Jews said: *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*, is that it was their Pasch, and at that festival time their laws forbade them to execute a capital sentence against any man. This is the opinion held by à Lapide, Suarez, Baronius and St. Augustine.

Other authors strive to reconcile opinions in the following manner: The power of condemning to death, in punishment for some crimes, and especially as regards high treason, was taken away from the Jews by the Roman authority, but the full ecclesiastical power was left with them, so that they could examine, condemn, and punish those who violated the law of God and their religious laws. For this reason Christ was pronounced guilty of death by the tribunal of Caiphas, as a blasphemer, because He called Himself the Son of God. It belonged to the Sanhedrim to judge of the crime of blasphemy. Before Pilate, however, He is arraigned, and accused that He had forbidden tribute to be paid to Cæsar; that He stirred up the people to sedition for the purpose of making Himself King; such a cause belonged to Pilate, the Roman governor, that Christ might be found guilty and condemned to be crucified. And when, at length, Christ was

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\* De Feria VI. in Parasceve.



found guilty of treason, and being a disturber of the peace, His sentence was that He should undergo the death of the cross, and thus was fulfilled the prophecy : *He will be delivered to the gentiles, and be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day he shall rise.*

Had He, by the judgment of the Sanhedrim, been put to death for blasphemy, He would not have been crucified, but only stoned to death like St. Stephen : and our Lord had to undergo the ignominious death of the cross in fulfilment of the prophecies, and as it was destined He should die.

When Christ was brought to the house of Pilate, the Roman procurator, He was conducted into the palace ; but they, the members of the Council and their ministers, remained outside, for the reason assigned by St. John, namely, *that they might not be defiled* ; according to the words of the Talmud : “ Let the court of the stranger be to you as the stable of oxen.”

Pilate respected their prejudice, and came forth on the platform in front of his palace to speak to them, and to find out the charges they brought against Jesus. He saw before him a vast concourse of people, with Caiphas the High-priest, the Chief-priests, and many rich Sadducees, with many of the leading men of Jerusalem ; and also a mixed rabble of the Jews, artisans, peasants, robbers, beggars, and all the off-scourings of the nation that were at this season of the year to be found in Jerusalem.

Our blessed Saviour remains standing, bound, in the hall of Pilate. His sacred countenance disfigured by the insults He had received the previous night ; weak and exhausted by His Agony, and the sufferings already endured, He is now accused before Pontius Pilate.

The accusations brought against Him are the following :—

1. They say in accusation against Him : *We have found this man perverting our nation.*

Jesus is silent, but the Prophet answers : *There is no truth in*

*their mouth ; their heart is vain.\** And, again, it might be said of that accusing multitude : *Whose mouth is full of cursing, of bitterness, and of deceit: Quia maledictione os ejus plenum est et amaritudine et dolo.†*

On the contrary, far from perverting your nation, He has come to overthrow the enemies of your nation ; as, on a former occasion, He caused Pharoah and his army to perish in the Red Sea in order to save your nation and people, and to bring you into the promised land.

A second accusation is : *We found this man forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.*

They knew very well that our Saviour had Himself caused the tribute to be paid, and that He taught them to pay it when He answered the question on this point : *Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.*

A third accusation is, that *he called himself Christ the king.* St. John answers this : ‡ *When he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, Jesus fled again into the mountains himself alone.*

The Roman governor excuses Christ, and tries to defend Him. Our Saviour had been condemned by the Jews in the house of the High-priest ; now they wish to have Him condemned by the gentiles, in the hall of Pilate, in order that He who came to offer His life for all should be condemned to death by all those, both Jews and gentiles, whom He came to save.

But, strange to say, the profane tribunal of the gentiles was unwilling to condemn Him, and far more lenient in its manner of treating Him than the religious tribunal of the Jews. The following colloquy between the gentiles, represented by Pilate, and the Jews accusing Christ, may show more clearly what took place before this tribunal :—

*Pilate. What evil hath he done ?*

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\* Psalms, v. 10. † Psalms. ‡ St. John.

*Jews.* If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee.

*Pilate.* I find no cause in Him.

*Jews.* He stirreth up the people throughout all Judea.

*Pilate.* I find no cause of death in Him.

*Jews.* He ought to die. *Debet mori.*

Not terrified by their accusations, Pilate did not hasten judgment, but waited to examine the whole state of the case.

Considering the accusations and the testimony against Him, he finds that the accusers are moved by envy and deceit in their testimony, and he sees only innocence in Christ, who stands accused before him.

We may suppose the Roman governor, accustomed to judicial forms, looking round for an advocate, and, to his great astonishment, no advocate appears, and there is no one found to say a word in His defence. Then, turning to Christ, he said to Him, we may suppose in a tone of pity and sadness: *Dost not thou hear how great testimonies they allege against thee?*

Christ maintains that solemn and mysterious silence which more than once during His Passion amazed and confounded His persecutors. *He answered never a word; so that the governor wondered exceedingly.*

He spoke in defence of Magdalen a short time before. He defended even the woman taken in adultery against her accusers, but the mystery of His silence in His own defence remains. The voice of the Eternal Father saying, *This is my beloved Son*, is not now heard. The Holy Ghost, *qui habet sapientiam vocis*, is now silent. The angels are not permitted to speak, the Apostles are absent, and even the heavens, which narrate the glory of God, hold their peace; so that there is no one found, either in heaven or on earth, to say one word in defence of the innocent Lamb of God, as He stands accused before the tribunals of this world. Thus, the just man perishes, and no one speaks in his defence.

*Pilate questions Christ about many things.*—Having heard all the accusations and clamours of the Jews, Pilate thought of speaking privately to our Lord, to ask some questions of the greatest importance. No doubt, he was seriously impressed by the silence and the whole demeanour of Christ. He entered the palace, therefore, and had the colloquy with Christ which is given in the Gospel narrative.

He asked Christ, first of all: *Art thou the King of the Jews?* He saw that their accusations were extraordinary, that they were vague, and without sufficient grounds or evidence. He understood, however, as much as that Christ had certainly called Himself a king. Even in this it was not a matter of disloyalty, for the title “King” in those days was given to princes, to wise men, and to the heads of some families, and, in our Saviour’s case, it might signify that He was a descendant of the royal house of David.

Pilate may have wished to know in what sense our Saviour claimed this title. Hence his question: *Art thou a king?*

Jesus answered: *My kingdom is not of this world.* He was in the world, but not of the world. He was not of the spirit of the world; neither was His kingdom. Although King and Lord of all things, He came into this world, *and the world knew him not; he came unto his own, and his own received him not.* As regards God, this world is only a point in His creation, and only a moment compared with eternity. The real kingdom of God is the kingdom of all ages: *Regnum omnium sæculorum.*

Pilate next asked Him: *What hast thou done?* A strange question to put to our Lord. To us the answer is simple enough. *All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made.* In the beginning, He created the heavens and the earth. He formed man of the clay of the earth, and breathed into him a living soul. *Whatever he wished, he hath made.\** St. John tells us: *But there are also many other things which Jesus did,*

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\* Ps. cxiii. 3.

which, if they were written, every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written.\* Now Pilate questions Christ as a judge: *What hast thou done?* He little thinks of the very short time that is to intervene before he will himself be questioned before the judgment seat of Christ, and asked: *Quid fecisti? What hast thou done?* And that then it will not be free to him to say, as he now does to the Jews: *I am innocent of the blood of this just man;* but he will have to acknowledge with Judas: *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*

Pilate further presses his question: *Art thou a king then?* Christ answers him: *Thou sayest that I am a king, &c.* As if He had said: "I am the divine Word, come into the world and made Man to be your King, in order to teach you the way of truth, and the true way to eternal life. They who love the truth, hear my voice and receive my light. They who hear my voice will receive the truth, the happiness, the eternity and the blessedness which their hearts desire."

We may ask ourselves: How do we hear the voice of Christ? How do we regard the truth in our dealings with God and our fellow-creatures? As we acknowledge Christ for our King, we should be ever ready to give testimony to the truth by our words and actions.

Pilate then asked Christ a further question: *What is truth?* A recent author† thus expresses himself on this remarkable question: "Pilate in that question expressed the despair of the old thinking world. One scheme had followed after another in religion and in philosophy, and men cast down their hands in hopelessness, considering that there was no realm of eternal verities, that everything was unreal, false and baseless. Have we not, in present times, come to much the same condition? Is not the end of modern thought the same, that all religions are false; there is no eternal standard of morality; no revelation of truth; no

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\* St. John, xxi. 25.

† "Trials of Jesus," Baring Gould.

certainly beyond the horizon bounded by the senses? Is not the sigh of the human heart at the present day: *What is truth?* Pilate, when he asked this question, went out and left Him who was the *Truth* itself; who came down from heaven to reveal the truth to men. So it is also now. Men seek everywhere for truth except in Christ. Truth is to be found in natural science, in metaphysics, in archæology, in the exact sciences, only not in Christianity. Yet Christ is the key to all the mysteries of life and creation, since for Him, as well as by Him, all things were made. Through Him alone can all enquiries of the world's history, of individual life, be unravelled.

"Hereafter, it may be, we shall look back on this century from the realms of eternal truth and perfect light, and sadly smile to see how men surrounded themselves with sparks of their own kindling, and wandered away from the truth, because they did not start from Christ, nor follow the lines that led up to Christ—lines everywhere visible in every branch of human activity, and of human knowledge to those who believe.

"Then we shall see how that, as Christ was the end of all, and explanation of the law, so is He the end and explanation of all creation."

"*Mercy and truth are met together,*" says Savanarola (commenting on the well-known passage of the Psalms, lxxxv. 10): *Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* "David puts four virtues together. There is but one God, that works in several ways, and His ways are manifest in His creation. Go to the crib of Bethlehem, and behold these four virtues at the corners of this crib, there for the first time united. Before the Incarnation, philosophy sought righteousness apart from peace, righteousness by its own efforts without Christ." "The Romans and other nations sought peace without righteousness, happiness—that is, by the emancipation of the individual will, without regard to a moral law. None found what they sought; and why? Because they



sought those things separately, and not united in the One who is the source, and giver, and end of all goodness."

Pilate did not wait for an answer to his question. Ludolph says that : " Perceiving the malice of the Jews, and the innocence of Jesus, he wished to set him at liberty with all speed ; or, perhaps, he was only able to ask the question about truth, and was not able to hear the final answer, since he began his judgment in truth, and finished it not in truth, but in perversity. Nevertheless, we read in the Gospel of the Nazarenes, and St. Augustine seems also to say, that Christ answered, that truth came from heaven, and was not upon earth ; but Pilate did not hear, either because he went out to the Jews, or on account of the noise of their shouting. Pilate asked a question about truth, but did not care about the answer. . . . So, many people inquire concerning truth, but will have nothing to do with what truth tells them about their faults, even though it is for their salvation's sake.

" *And when he had said this, that is, put this question about truth, he went out again to the Jews, that he might bear witness to the innocence of our Lord, and saith to them : I find no cause in him ; nothing worthy of death. For neither Pilate nor the Emperor, his master, regarded anything of importance but the question of the earthly kingdom, and, therefore, the former held Jesus guiltless, saying that he found no cause in Him.*" \*

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## CHAPTER X.

### CHRIST BEFORE HEROD.

(L.) *And Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad ; for he was desirous of a long time to see him, because he had heard many things of him. And he questioned him in many words. But he answered him*

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\* " Hours of the Passion " (Prime).

*nothing. And the Chief-priests and the Scribes stood by, earnestly accusing him. And Herod, with his army, set him at nought, and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day, for before they were enemies one to another.*

There are four remarkable Herods mentioned in the New Testament.

The first, mentioned by St. Matthew,\* was the son of Antipas, who was a proselyte in religion, an Idumean by birth, called *great*, by reason of his authority, and his surname was Ascalonita. He was the father of Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he caused to be put to death; and also of Archelaus and Philip. He was the King of Judea. This man, hearing that the Messiah was born, *was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together the Sanhedrim, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. . . . Then privately calling the wise men, (he) learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said. . . . And when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. . . . Perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men (they had returned to their own country by another way), (he) was exceeding angry; and, sending, killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under† . . . that thus Christ might certainly be included in the slaughter, who, however, had been taken into Egypt until the death of Herod.*

The second Herod was Archelaus, the son of the first, and sur-named Antipas. He was not King of Judea, but only Tetrarch of Galilee. This man, because he was reprov'd by St. John the Baptist for having taken Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, *apprehended John, and bound him, and put him into prison ‡ . . . And having a mind to put him to death, he feared the people. But*

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\* St. Matt. ii. 1.    † St. Matt. ii.    ‡ Ibid. xiv. 5.

*on Herod's birth-day, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.* And at her request, which was prompted by her mother, he caused John to be beheaded in prison.

This was the Herod who came to Jerusalem in the days of the Passion of Christ, and before whom our Saviour was interrogated and treated as a mock king.

We may refer briefly to the other two, so that we may be able to keep them all distinct in their relations to our Saviour and His Apostles.

The third Herod of note in the New Testament was the son of Aristobulus, and nephew of the first Herod. His surname was Agrippa, and he was also king, but only of Trachonitidis, Galilee, and Ituria. It was he who, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, *stretched forth his hand to afflict some of the Church. . . . And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And, seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. . . . And upon a day appointed, Herod being arrayed in kingly apparel, sat in the judgment seat, and made an oration to them* (the Tyrians and Sidonians). *And the people made acclamation, saying: It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God; and, being eaten up by vermin, he gave up the ghost.\**

The fourth was also called Agrippa, the son of the preceding Herod. He was King of Chalcidis and Trachonitidis. He is called King Agrippa and Bernice in the Acts.† It was before this king that St. Paul pleaded his cause; and it was he who said to Festus: *This man* (Paul) *might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar;* and who said to Paul himself: *In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian.‡*

From this account of the Herods, given in Holy Scripture, we are able to know who they are, and also the character of each.§

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\* Acts xii. 1, 2, et seq. † Ibid. xxv. 13. ‡ Ibid. xxvi. 28 and 32. § *Vide* "Questiones Scripturasticæ," sub nomine Herodis.

The second Herod, he who was the murderer of St. John the Baptist, is he to whom Pilate sent our Lord.

We have now to consider the trial of our Saviour by this wicked and flagitious man.

Pilate, according to the Roman law, sent Christ to Herod, because, according to that law, a man should be judged by the ruler of his own province, and as our Saviour was a Galilean, He was sent for trial to the Tetrarch of Galilee. Pilate, that he might not be obliged to pronounce sentence upon Him, whom he knew to be innocent, and to be delivered up to judgment through envy, sent Him to Herod. And as Herod was the Tetrarch of that country, with him should remain the responsibility of punishing or of liberating our blessed Redeemer.

According to Venerable Bede, it was by the order of Divine Providence that no excuse could be assigned afterwards to the Jews, to enable them to say that Christ was condemned to death, not by the Jews, but by the Romans. This Herod, who was a Jew both by birth and religion, was permitted, together with his army, to manifest their views with regard to Christ, and then was shown the impiety of both provinces in conspiring for His death: of Judea, in which he was born; and of Galilee, in which He was brought up, and in which He for the most part lived.

Herod rejoiced at the opportunity afforded him of seeing Christ; not through the idea of obtaining any good from Him, but because he had heard of Him as a wise man, and one who worked miracles. He had a foolish desire of seeing, through curiosity, a strange man, and of hearing what he might have to say. How many in our day are suffering from the same weakness!

Herod questions our Lord in many words, and he treated Him in an insulting manner, so that Jesus answered him nothing, for He knew whom to answer. And the speaking and silence of Jesus do not admit of being judged in every case by the same rule, any more than His command to those on whom He worked

miracles, to be silent concerning them. "He was silent," says Ven. Bede, "and did nothing; for a man of so much cruelty was unworthy to see divine things; and Christ declined admiration and vain glory. It is supposed that in Herod all the impious are represented, and he certainly does not ask our Lord questions for the sake of learning, or for any other good purpose."

Ludolph says: "He questioned Him in many words, not as studious, but as curious; not as a lover of truth, but as a tempter; not through the desire of gaining any advantage to his soul, but through the desire of novelties, or of witnessing strange things; and on this account He answered nothing, and performed no sign, or wonder, or miracle in his presence.

"Besides, Herod did not consider Christ as our Saviour, but as a wonder-worker; therefore he was unworthy of the miracles and of the words of Christ."\*

To the accusations before Pilate, Christ answered a few words, but to Herod He answers nothing. It seemed just that some answer should be given to Pilate, who was unwilling to condemn our Lord; but Herod and the other leaders of the Jews, who, against their own law, were condemning the innocent to death, were considered unworthy of, and unfit for, any word from Christ during the course of His Passion.

Herod desired to see our Lord through a foolish and unworthy intention, and he expected a sign from Him, and for this purpose interrogated Him, and, when he failed, he manifested his mind by his contempt and mocking; and not only Herod, but his army also mocked Him. Amongst other things, they put on Him a white garment of derision. He is clothed in a white garment to signify, as Ven. Bede says, His immaculate Passion, since He was the immaculate Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. "See," says Theophylactus, "how that in everything which Herod does, the devil is irritated and confounded. He

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\* "Hours of the Passion."

excites him to reproaches and insults against Christ, whence the truth is the more clearly made known."

St. Gregory says that Christ is silent, because He chooses rather to be despised openly by the proud, than to be praised by unbelievers.

*Herod sent Him back to Pilate.*—And in thus sending Him back, Herod is considered to have consented to our Lord's death; because, when he found Him innocent, he should have set Him free, and not sent Him again for judgment before another judge. He sent Him back to Pilate, as if to say: "Do with this foolish man what you please."

*And Herod and Pilate were made friends.*—"See," says Theophylactus, "how the devil unites discrepancies, that he may bring about the death of Christ. He unites and conciliates in one conspiracy these two enemies. Are we not confounded at this? He pacifies enemies in order to put Christ to death, and we do not even keep united to our friends in order to our own salvation." This nefarious treaty of Herod and Pilate, which concurred in putting Christ to death, is preserved, as it were, by right of succession both by Jews and gentiles, as differing in race and religion, and even in mind, yet agreeing in persecuting Christians and the faithful of the Church of Christ.

This also represents the unanimity with which all heretical and false religious sects persecute the true Catholic Church and her children in every age. They disagree in their own tenets, in their nationalities, their beliefs, their customs and manners, but Jew and gentile, Mahomedan and Greek, Lutheran and Calvinist, &c., become friends when there is question of enacting a penal law against Catholics, or of suppressing any Catholic truth or dogma.

*Herod and Pilate were made friends on that day.*—The unjust condemnation of Christ was the impious and perfidious concord of the wicked rulers; but, as the Psalmist says: *The enemies of the truth are to be destroyed, not upheld.* Christ is the peace of angels



and men. He who is the enemy of peace cannot be the friend of God.

St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, says that it was becoming that He who came on earth to bring peace to men, should pacify those very men by whom He was condemned.

The author of the "Holy Court" thus remarks on the good drawn by our Saviour out of wickedness during the time of His Passion: "He had caused a place to be bought for the burial of pilgrims by the price of His blood; He reconciled Herod and Pilate by the loss of His life; He sets Barabbas at liberty by the loss of His honour; He speaks not one word to him who killed St. John the Baptist; He appears before Pilate as the King of dolours, that He might become for us the King of glories."

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## CHAPTER XI.

### CHRIST A SECOND TIME BEFORE PILATE—BARABBAS PREFERRED BEFORE HIM.

AFTER Christ was brought back to Pilate, he, speaking to the Chief-priests and princes of the people, said to them: (L.) *You have presented unto me this man as one that perverteth the people; and behold I, having examined him before you, can find no cause in this man in these things wherein you accuse him; no, nor Herod either. For, I sent you to him, and behold nothing worthy of death is done to him. I will chastise him, therefore, and release him.* That is, "I will have Him scourged, and afterwards set at liberty;" and this, although he finds no fault in Him, but in order to satisfy the hatred of the Jews.

Before Pilate delivered Jesus to be scourged, being desirous all along of liberating Him from death, he thought of a means by which this could be done. It was the custom of the governor to

release some unfortunate prisoner each year at the Paschal time, according to the will or desire of the people. There was then a notorious and seditious man in prison called Barabbas, (M.) *who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder. And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire that he would do as he had ever done unto them. (Mt.) Pilate said: whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ. For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.*

When Pilate had proposed this, sitting on his judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying: (Mt.) *Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.* Whilst Pilate was receiving this message: *The Chief-priests and Ancients persuaded the people that they should ask for Barabbas, and make Jesus away.* Then, the messenger having left, Pilate said to them: *Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? (L.) But the whole multitude together cried out: Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.* Pilate said to them: (Mt.) *What shall I do, then, with Jesus, who is called Christ; or, as St. Mark puts it: What will you then that I do to the King of the Jews. But they again cried out: Crucify him. And Pilate saith to them: Why, what evil hath he done? (L.) I find no cause of death in him; I will chastise him, therefore, and let him go. (Mt.) But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified.*

Pilate seeing that he gained no advantage, but excited more the multitude, (Mt.) *taking water, he washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it. And the whole people, answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children. Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them to be crucified.* Or, as St. Luke says: *But Jesus he delivered up to their will.*

That is, under the pretence that he intended to condemn Jesus to death, he subjected Him to scourging, but he hopes that the

fury of the people will be satisfied by the scourging, and that after it they will not urge His death.

For the same reason, according to St. Augustine and others, Pilate permitted Christ to be maltreated by the soldiers, clothed in a purple garment, crowned with thorns, and to be ill-used by all the other opprobriums and insults, in the hope that the Jews would be satisfied, and that he might ultimately liberate Him from death.

In this portion of our Saviour's Passion there are many things to be considered. Representing to our minds Christ clothed in the white robe with which He was vested in the house of Herod, we may examine:—

1st. *The custom of releasing to the people a prisoner.*—Whether it was customary to release a prisoner at other feasts as well as the Pasch, is uncertain. Some authors say that this was also done at the Feast of Tabernacles and of Pentecost, and they refer to St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospels to prove this ; as these Gospels mention only in a general way the feast day, or the solemn feast.

The custom of releasing a prisoner, amongst the Jews, was in memory of their liberation out of Egypt, and it was also ordained for the purpose of giving greater solemnity to the occasion. Usually the choice of the prisoner was left entirely to the people. Now the governor proposes two, Barabbas and Jesus. Barabbas, the worst man then in prison, a robber, a seditious man, who, in a riot, had committed murder ; and *Jesus, who is called Christ*. They were accustomed to execute some, and to release others of their prisoners on this occasion. On the night of the Pasch, the Angel of the Lord saved the Hebrews, and struck all the first-born of the Egyptians. In order to represent this Pasch, and perpetuate its remembrance, they released on this festival day one prisoner, whose death was at hand, and executed some of the others destined to die. Or, perhaps, they did this in memory of the crossing of the Red Sea, in which the Children of Israel were

saved, and the Egyptians drowned. The Jews had petitioned the Roman Emperor that this custom might be preserved and observed just as it was before Judea was subjected to Rome. On this day we have Barabbas liberated, and Jesus, together with the two thieves, executed.

2nd. *We have Pilate proposing to the people Christ or Barabbas.*—This was but a very poor favour as far as Pilate was concerned, since, even if our Lord was released and His life granted, it would not have been as an innocent man. On this action of Pilate, St. John Chrysostom asks us to consider: “That Pilate did not say ‘He has sinned, or is worthy of death, but may be pardoned on account of the festival,’ but, having first excused Him, and acquitted Him of every charge, he, as a last resource, entreated that if they would not set Him free as an innocent man, they would at least, even when regarding Him as guilty, yield Him to the feast or season.”

The contrast between the two thus proposed is so great that we cannot realize it. Barabbas is described by the Evangelists. St. Mark says that in a sedition he was guilty of murder; St. John, that he was a robber; St. Matthew, that he was a low robber or scoundrel.

As to the signification of the word Barabbas, some say it is from the Arabic, and means the son of a father—*filius patris*. Others, with St. Jerome, adopt a meaning equivalent to *filius magistri*—the son of a master. Origen says that Barabbas, in many copies, was called Jesus likewise. The Armenian copy has this reading: “Whom will ye that I deliver unto you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ.” Some think that it was this man who was the leader of the insurrection occasioned in Samaria, by the Romans planting their eagles on Mount Gerizim; that it was he who tore them down, when a tumult was caused, and many were killed on both sides. However this may be, it is certain that he was popular, a member of the zealots who opposed

the Roman rule, and that he occasioned a riot. Contrast this man with our Saviour.

3rd. *Consider the message of Pilate's wife.*—Her name was Claudia Procula, and, according to Cornelius à Lapide, she is venerated as a saint amongst the Greeks. She was a member of the Claudian family, to which the Emperor Tiberius belonged. She knew by visions what the Jews would neither believe nor understand. Ven. Bede, in his commentary on St. Matthew, supposes this vision to come from the devil, who understood that his own ruin would be effected by the crucifixion, and now tried to plot against it through the instrumentality of a woman.

Ludolph the Saxon says (Tierce): "Thus the wife of a gentile understood by visions and dreams what the Jews, who were fully awake, would not believe or understand. For the devil had appeared to her, seeking to induce her by terrors to work for the deliverance of Christ. For the devil, now at last understanding that through Christ he would lose his spoils in the world and in hell, repented his efforts to get Him apprehended, and, therefore, sent visions to this woman, that by her the death of Christ might be hindered, and that as he at first brought death into the world through a woman, so now he might rescue Christ from the hands of the Jews by a woman, lest through death he should lose the empire over death.

"It is thought that all that was done by Pilate and his wife to deliver our Lord was suggested by the devil, who, through them, endeavoured to prevent our redemption."

SS. Ambrose, Chrysostom and Austin consider that this vision came from God, to proclaim the innocence of Christ before the unjust sentence of His condemnation was pronounced. The dream came from God in all probability, and it foretold what would happen to Pilate for this crime. To this case we may apply the words of St. Luke: *Duo erunt in lecto uno, unus assumetur et alter relinquetur* (xvii. 34).

The author of the "Holy Court" says of her: "A pagan lady, the wife of Pilate, is more knowing than all the lawyers; more religious than the priests; more zealous than the Apostles; more courageous than the men-at-arms: when she sleepeth, Jesus is in her sleep; when she talketh, Jesus is upon her tongue; if she write, Jesus is under her pen; her letter defended him at the judgment hall when all the world condemned Him; she calleth Him holy, when they use Him as a thief; she maketh her husband wash his hands before he touched that blood, the high price of which she proclaimed. She was a Roman lady, called Claudia Procula, and it was very fit she should defend this Jesus, who was to plant the seat of His Church in Rome."

4th. *The choice made by the Jews was proclaimed by the words: Not this man, but Barabbas.*

St. John Chrysostom says that by this they would make out that Jesus was worse than a robber; so iniquitous that He could not be set free by the privilege of the festival. In this action the mystery of future infidelity is shown, namely, that Antichrist will be preferred to Christ. Thieves asked for a thief, and esteemed a murderer above the Author of life. And Bede thus speaks of their choice: "Even to this day the petition of the Jews, which they obtained with so much trouble, clings to them. For when they had the choice, they preferred a thief to Jesus, a murderer to the Saviour, a destroyer of life to its Author, they deservedly lost their salvation and their life, and became sunk in robberies and seditions to such a degree that they lost both their country and their kingdom, which they loved better than Christ, and up to this date they have not been found worthy to regain that liberty of soul and body which they then sold. Therefore, the Jews cannot have peace, because they chose a seditious prince, that is the devil, who still reigns over them, in preference to our Lord" (Ludolph the Saxon—Tierce).

*The preference given by the Jewish people has four circumstances to be considered.*



1. The difference of persons. Barabbas was a seditious man, a homicide and a robber; Jesus was the Author of life, the Holy and Just One. 2. The cries by which the people expressed themselves. It is not a peaceful choice; their voices are not timid or wavering, they are piercing and seditious, and are uttered with force, and sound forth fury. 3. The unanimity of suffrage. All the people, all cried out with one accord. There is no voice heard to the contrary. 4. The hatred from which the preference proceeded. They did not care for Barabbas; any other but Jesus would have been preferred before him; although he was popular they knew his crimes. They demanded that Jesus should be put to death and exterminated.

This preference is renewed every day by different sorts of persons. 1. By the impious, who prefer the false glimmers of blind reason, or, more often, the ways of libertines to all the revelation of Christ and the pure light of Gospel truth. 2. By heretics, who prefer an innovator, a seditious man, one who has rebelled against the Church, to him whom Christ has made His Vicar here on earth. 3. By worldlings, who prefer the world to Christ, and the laws of the world to those of the Gospel. 4. By sinners, who prefer their passions, their pleasures and their own satisfaction to Christ, and who cry out with one accord: *Not this man, but Barabbas.*

5th. *The question of Pilate to the people, and his efforts to save our Lord.* “*What shall I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?*”

Five times did Pilate seek to rescue Christ from the hands of the Jews. Three instances are given by St. Luke, and two by St. John.

1. *And Pilate said to the Chief-priests, and to the multitudes: I find no cause in this man.\**

2. *And Pilate again spoke to them, desiring to release Jesus.†*

3. *And he said to them the third time: Why, what evil hath this*

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\* St. Luke, xxiii. 4.      † St. Luke, xxiii. 20.

man done? *I find no cause of death in him. I will chastise him, therefore, and let him go.\**

4. *And Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and saith to them: Behold I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him.†*

5. *And from henceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend.‡*

*The Jews cry out for His crucifixion. But they again cry out: Crucify him. But they cried out the more: Let him be crucified.*

Our Lord sees in that crowd some of the four or five thousand to whom He gave the miraculous bread, many to whom He had often spoken the words of eternal life; many whom He had cured of their maladies; those whom He had known so well, and with whom He had so often conversed. He had already shed tears over their city, and sweated blood for them in the garden, and now He was about to give the last drop of His blood, together with His life, for them. They cry out for it, and in thus crying out for His crucifixion they give occasion for the words spoken by the Prophet: *I have brought up children, but they have despised me.*

Pilate asks what evil hath He done? and only one answer can be given to that question. *He hath done all things well. He made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.*

*Pilate washes his hands.*—This action justified Jesus; it did not justify Pilate. On the contrary, by this very action he declared Christ to be just: *I am innocent of the blood of this just man*; and yet he gave orders for the scourging and crucifixion of this *just man*. How, therefore, can he be innocent?

It was customary among the ancients that a man who wished to declare himself guiltless of any crime, should take water and wash his hands before the people.

In the present instance Pilate was a partner to the crime of the

\* St. Luke, xxiii. 22. † St. John, xix. 4. ‡ Ibid. xix. 12.

people, but more innocent than they. Hence, Pope Leo says : " The crime of the Jews was greater than that of Pilate ; but he, by abandoning his own judgment and making that of others responsible for the sin, did not escape guiltless. Those who excuse themselves from consenting to wrong-doing which they can effectively prevent, imitate the example of Pilate. In vain ; water cannot wash out his guilt. No ; whether it comes from the ocean, or from whatever river or fountain or torrent. No ; although the heavens should open their flood-gates, and another Deluge should pour down upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. From Pilate's conduct we learn the great danger of tampering with conscience. He represents all those who excuse themselves for failing to do what they know to be right."

When Pilate, in washing his hands, said : *I am innocent of the blood of this just man*, the whole people, answering, said : *His blood be upon us, and upon our children*.

This is the terrible imprecation of the Jews. In what spirit, it may be asked, do the Jews use these words ? In the spirit of fury and impiety. They meant it, and by those words they called down upon themselves and their posterity an anathema, which has fallen upon them with the rigour of divine justice.

A pagan judge trembled at the thought of condemning Christ. He feared lest he should incur the anger of heaven by an unjust sentence. The Jews, who believed in the true God, in order to obtain His condemnation, boldly faced the danger, and drew a terrible curse upon themselves and upon their children.

St. Jerome says : " The words in which the Jews answered were excellent and grace-giving, but their meaning was very evil. We ought to desire that His blood should come upon us, but in order to cleanse us, according to the words of the Apocalypse : ' He hath washed us from our sins in His own blood. ' " \*

While we think of the Jews, and reflect on the spirit in which

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\* Apoc. i. 15, (Apud Ludolph the Saxon.)

they utter the words, let us consider how we should give expression to our sentiments in regard to the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

With a lively faith, profound respect and tender charity, we should be mindful of that precious blood, that it may be offered up frequently in satisfaction for our sins : *Sanguis D.N.J.C. redemit nos ab omni peccato.*

O adorable and divine blood, shed for my salvation, descend upon me, to cleanse me, to purify me, and to sanctify me. Through that precious blood we have been made the children of God in baptism; through it we have been purified from our sins in the sacrament of Penance. It is offered every day on the altar in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in atonement for our sins. We are invited to receive it in the Holy Communion to nourish our souls, that we may live the life of Christ, and participate in the spirit of Christ. May that precious blood be upon me and mine, and upon all the faithful, to save us; may it be upon sinners, to cleanse them; upon heretics, to enlighten them; upon Jews, to convert and to unite all in the true faith, and bring all into the true way of salvation.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR.

(J.) *Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him.* After the scourging : (M.) *The soldiers led him away into the court of the palace.* (Mt.) *Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band. And, stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And, bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying : Hail, King of the Jews. And, spitting upon him, they took the reed and struck his head.*

After this, Pilate took Jesus, and (J.) *went forth again, and saith to them: Behold, I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him. (Jesus thereofth came forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garments). And he saith to them: Behold the Man. When the Chief-priests, therefore, and the servants, had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him; crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Take him you, and crucify him, for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

*When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again, and said to Jesus: Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer, Pilate therefore saith to him: Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee. Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given to thee from above. Therefore, he that hath delivered me to thee hath the greater sin. And from henceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.*

Pilate, hearing these words, feared lest he should be accused of enmity and perfidy towards Cæsar; and, on the other hand, he was unwilling to condemn Christ, Who had said that He was a king, but that His Kingdom was not of this world. Doubtful, therefore, and hesitating, *he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in the Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the parascere of the Pasch, about the sixth hour, and, wishing to try a last experiment, pointing to Jesus, whom he brought out with him, with his finger, and prompted by divine inspiration, according to the Fathers of the Church, he saith to the Jews: Behold your king. But they cried out: Away with him; away with him; crucify him. Pilate saith*

*to them : Shall I crucify your king? The Chief-priests answered, we have no king but Cæsar.*

*Then, therefore, he delivered him to them to be crucified.*

*The Scourging.*—On the above portion of the history of the Passion, we have first to think over the scourging.

Pilate subjected Christ to the scourging, that by this punishment he might appease the Jews and liberate Him.

This is the opinion of St. Augustine and others founded on the words of St. Luke's Gospel :\* *I will chastise him,† therefore, and release him.*

Others, with St. Jerome, contend that Christ was scourged, in accordance with the custom which required, that all condemned to the death of the cross should be scourged before they were executed.

Others again, with Calmet, assert that there were two scourgings—one according to the custom, and another to satisfy the people; especially as St. Matthew and St. Mark mention a scourging immediately before the sentence of death was pronounced, and St. John narrates other events as happening between the scourging and the sentence of death. This opinion does not appear to be well founded. The two first Evangelists mention the fact of the scourging; and St. John narrates more minutely the series of events in this part of the Passion.

*The Place and Manner of the Scourging.*—Although the sacred Scriptures are silent as to the manner and place of Christ's scourging, yet, as we are taught by J. Lipsius (as quoted by Benedict XIV., De Feria VI.) that criminals were bound to a pillar and scourged in the pretorium before they were executed; and there is the ancient tradition that Jesus was scourged in the pretorium; we conclude with St. Jerome and Ven. Bede that our Lord was tied to a pillar, and scourged in the

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\* St. Luke, xxiii. 16.

† The word used (*παιδεύσας*) is contemptuous—it means to correct as a naughty child, or as a slave, to deter him from again committing the same offence.



hall of Pontius Pilate. These two authors attest that, in their day, the column or pillar at which our Lord was scourged was to be seen preserved in Jerusalem, and that the stains of the precious blood could be seen upon it. It was brought to Rome in the year 1213, and placed in the Church of St. Praxedis, where it is still preserved and venerated.

Ludolph, speaking of it, says :\* “A piece of this pillar is shown in the Church of St. Praxedis, at Rome, but the larger portion is said to be in a church on Mount Sion, in the place where the Gospel is read, and, according to Bede, it bears even to this day (the day of Ven. Bede) plain marks of our Lord’s blood.”

According to Calmet,† “the punishment of scourging was very common among the Jews. Moses ordains :‡ *If there be a controversy between men, and they call upon the judges, they shall give the prize of justice to him whom they perceive to be just ; and him whom they find to be wicked, they shall condemn of wickedness. And if they see that the offender be worthy of stripes, they shall lay him down, and shall cause him to be beaten before them. According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be : yet so that they exceed not the number of forty, lest thy brother depart shamefully torn before thy eyes.*”

There were two ways of giving the lash\* ; one with thongs or whips, made of rope-ends or straps of leather ; the other with rods or twigs. The offender was stripped from the shoulders to his middle, and tied by his arms to a low pillar, that he might lean forward, and the executioners the more easily strike his back. Some maintain that they never gave more or less than thirty-nine strokes, but that in greater faults they struck with proportionate violence. Others think that when the fault and circumstances required it, they might increase the number of blows. St. Paul informs us § that at five different times he received *forty stripes save*

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\* Tierce, “Hours of the Passion.” † Dic. of the Holy Bible.

‡ Deut. xxv. 1, 3. § 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

one, which seems to imply that thirty-nine was a fixed number not to be exceeded. The Apostle also shows that correction with rods was different from that with a whip; for, he says, *thrice was I beaten with rods.*

Some little bones, or pieces of bones, were tied to the scourges to increase the pain, and these whips were called scorpions, from the suffering they occasioned.\* The sufferings endured during this torture are mentioned by the historian, Philo, who, speaking of the manner in which Flaccus treated the Jews of Alexandria, says he made them suffer the punishment of the whip, which (he remarks) is not less insupportable to a free man than death itself. And our blessed Lord, speaking of the pains and sufferings of His Passion, mentions His scourging in the second place.

Having given these few particulars of the penalty of scourging as it was inflicted in those days, we may now reflect on the particulars of our Saviour's scourging.

Speaking of it, the Prophet Isaias said :† *And we have seen him, and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of him. Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity; and his look was, as it were, hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; and we have thought him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, and was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.*

It is remarkable that the Evangelists narrate this event so briefly. St. John simply says : *Then Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him.* St. Matthew : *And having scourged Jesus, (he) delivered him unto them to be crucified.* And St. Mark : *And so Pilate being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.* They would, as

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\* Calmet's Dictionary.    † Isaias, liii. 2.

it were, draw a veil over this terrible scene, and not attempt to describe it in words. Hence, in regard to the particulars, we are left to judge of them from the ancient prophecies, the customs of the people, and private revelations. The Evangelists, however, convey in their few words the truth that Jesus was delivered up to the soldiers, and that His sacred body, in which dwelt the plenitude of the Divinity, was subjected to the ignominious penalty of the scourging. Not that the scourges could reach the Divinity, but in that body which He had assumed for love of us, He endured the scourges that through His bruises we might be healed.

After the Children of Israel had come out of Egypt, and when they were travelling through the desert, and suffering from scarcity of water, God said to Moses,\* *Behold I will stand there before thee, upon the rock Horeb; and thou shalt strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink.* That rock was stricken for the good of the people, that they might not perish, and it was a figure of Christ, who was called before that, a corner-stone that maketh both one; who, being struck with blows and scourges, would give forth the saving fountain of His precious blood to rescue us from perishing, to extinguish the thirst of our miseries, that, partaking of His grace, the stains of our sins might be washed out.

The Jews and the Romans punished criminals by scourging; but with the difference, that for the Jews the number of blows was determined by the law as above stated, and with the Romans the number was not determined, but left to the will and strength of the executioners and spectators.

Our Saviour was scourged according to the Roman law, and the number of blows was not determined in His case, and therefore we do not know for certain the exact number of stripes he received. He was scourged with the whips, and not by rods, because slaves were scourged in this manner, and the rods were

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\* Exod. xvii. 6.

used for the free, and, according to the Apostle, Christ had taken upon Himself the form of a slave or servant. According to the Roman custom, His body was entirely naked when scourged. The number of the executioners were four, according to some, and according to others one. St. Jerome holds the latter opinion, as it was the custom of the Romans. And Ven. Bede has the singular opinion that Pilate himself scourged our Lord, according to the words of St. John: *Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.* This sentence need not refer to Pilate in any other sense than according to the common rule of casuists: *Qui facit per alium facit per se.*

Again, returning to the number of blows which He received, there is one opinion which says that the wounds inflicted by the scourging were 5,335; and Ludolph gives the number as 5,435; and another author, Lanspergius, says 5,460. But all this is uncertain, and must be a mere matter of human supposition. It is certain, however, that the number was in excess of 40, and according to the private revelation of St. Bridget, the number of blows were over 5,000. This opinion as to their number and intensity is one in accordance with the words of the Psalmist: \* *And I have been scourged all the day, and my chastisement hath been from the morning;* verified, not in the length of time spent in the scourging, but in the number of wounds and blows.

We may then picture to ourselves the scene of the scourging as described by the Fathers. Our Saviour's hands and feet were tied to the marble pillar, like Isaac bound on the altar, or the Paschal lamb about to be sacrificed. His body was naked, and exposed to the derisive jeers and insults of that degraded multitude. In the case of the three children who were thrown into the burning furnace by order of the King of Babylon, God did not permit their garments, or even a hair of their heads, to be injured; but here there is no protection extended to His only-begotten

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\* Psalms, lxxii. 14.

Son, who is stripped of His garments, and suffers more from the sense of shame and degradation than from the scourges. The executioners, strong, barbarous men from the confines of Egypt, their number uncertain, did not recognise their brother in Him whom they scourged. As in the days of the plagues of Egypt : \* *When no man saw his brother, nor moved himself out of the place that he was.* After the scourging, the soldiers cut the ropes that bound Him to the pillar, and Jesus falls to the ground, bathed in His own blood. St. Augustine says that they continued to strike even after our Saviour had fallen to the ground, according to the prescription of the law of Deuteronomy,† and as signified by the Psalmist, when he said : *I am come unto the depth of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me;* that is, as if He would say : “I sank into the depth of the sea of my own blood, and the tempest of my blows and sorrows overwhelmed me.” And again : *The wicked have wrought upon my back; they have lengthened their iniquity.*‡

We read in Deuteronomy : *According to the measure of the sin, shall the measure also of the stripes be.* Now, Christ was scourged for our sins, which are certainly innumerable ; hence the stripes that He received were countless. Of this Isaias speaks, saying : *From the sole of the foot to the top of the head there is no soundness therein.* Then were fulfilled the words of the same prophet : *There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness, and we have thought him, as it were, a leper, as one struck by God and afflicted.*

St. Augustine says : “From His face all beauty had gone, and He who was beautiful above the sons of men, was made an unsightly spectacle to all, because the malice of the wicked had defiled His sacred countenance with blows” (Ludolph’s “Hours of the Passion”—Tierce.)

\* Exod. x. 23.

† This is not a proof ; because our Saviour was scourged, as we have already said, according to the Roman law, and was tied erect to the pillar.

‡ Psalms, cxxviii. 3.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

(Mt.) *Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band. And, stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him, and, plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And, bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews. And, spitting upon him, they took the reed and struck his head.*

The Royal Prophet said, speaking in the person of Christ: *Omnes videntes me deriserunt me: All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head.\**

This prophecy we find verified in the scene now presented before us, when the soldiers put on Christ a purple garment, and placed on His head a crown of thorns, and a reed in His right hand, and, genuflecting before Him, they saluted Him: *Hail, King of the Jews.*

It does not appear that Pilate ordered Christ to be crowned, and we may conclude that it was the action of the soldiers themselves. They knew that Christ had said He was a king, and for this reason they treat him as a mock king.

1. *The Soldiers.*—In this scene we have mention made once more of a band, or cohort, of soldiers taking part in our Saviour's Passion, that is, to the number of 300 or 500. It is probable that cohorts among the Romans, as companies among the moderns, often varied as to their number.†

The soldiers, without authority, but in order to please the Jews, and it may be that they are paid money by the Jews, thus treat

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\* Psalms, xxi. 8. † Calmet's Dictionary.



our blessed Lord. No other motive can be assigned for their cruelty.

2. *The Crown of Thorns*.—Writers do not agree as to the nature of the thorns, or the form of the crown. The thorns were certainly of such a nature that they could be platted. There are several species of thorn growing in Palestine. One kind is now known as "Christ's thorn" (*Zizyphus, Spina Christi*). This is a shrubby plant that grows to the height of six feet or more, and yields a slightly acid fruit about the size of a sloe, which is eaten by the Egyptians and Arabs. It abounds in flexible twigs, which are armed with a profusion of sharp, strong prickles, growing in pairs, the one straight, and the other somewhat curved.\* Near Jericho, this is the principal tree, growing twenty or thirty feet high, with its sub-angular branches studded with long, pointed, sharp thorns. We can understand the nature of these thorns to some extent, when we are told that a single thorn is sometimes a couple of inches long, as sharp as a pin, and as hard as a bone.

There is no doubt that ridicule is their object now, as the reed put into His hand and the scarlet cloak on His back were only as marks of mockery and contempt. Although this was their object now, we may well suppose also that it was with an intent to torture Him that they pressed a crown of thorns upon His head. It seems quite certain that they meant cruelty as well as ridicule in all this.

The burning bush was used by God for the liberation of the Israelites. Here, in our Saviour's Passion, the thorns are used in the liberation of the human race. The earth was cursed in the fall of our first parents to bring forth thorns and thistles. To Jesus, the first-born of God and man, it gives its sharpest thorns when He is removing the curse brought upon our race.

The removal of the curse from creation, which is now groaning and travailing in pain, is frequently set forth by illustrations taken

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\* Imp. Bible Dictionary, Bramble.

from the disappearance of the thorns and briars.\* The thorns exhibited for veneration, as relics from Christ's crown, in the Church of the Holy Cross, in Rome, correspond to the above description in their length and form and point.

The crown itself, as that preserved in the Cathedral in Paris, is carefully described by those who have seen it. It is like a cap by which the skull is covered, not in the form of a riband or fillet to surround the head. The tradition is that, in the thirteenth century, St. Louis of France rescued this from Baldwin II. of Constantinople, on payment of a large sum of money which that monarch required (Benedict XIV., De Feria VI. in Parasceve).

"Crowns are so little in use among us, that we distinguish the supreme magistrates of countries by the phrase 'crowned heads;' but in the East they were worn on many occasions which required demonstrations of joy. Job † speaks of binding a crown on his head, which we are not, we presume, to take as a royal crown (that would not need binding), but as one of those tokens of rejoicing which the custom of his country demanded on certain occasions. But we have this custom described at full length in Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus: *Let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered; let no meadow escape our riots.*‡

"The true import of the crown of thorns, placed by the Roman soldiers on the head of our Lord, was as a derision of His inauguration as King of the Jews; and it was not a tarnished golden crown which they employed, but a prickly, vegetable one, to degrade, in a very expressive and designedly ridiculous manner, the triumphant occasion on which they thus bedecked Him."§

According to some, that crown of thorns had 72 sharp points, which opened as many fountains of blood in the sacred head of Christ; that precious blood which then flowed: *Like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard, the beard of*

\* Isa. lv. 13; Ezech. xxviii. 24; see Bible Dictionary. † Job, xxxi. 36.

‡ Wisd. ii. 8. § Calmet's Dictionary.

*Aaron, which ran down to the skirt of his garment : as the dew of Hermon, which descendeth upon Mount Sion.\**

In the revelations of St. Bridget, our Blessed Lady, speaking to her, represents this mystery as follows :—

“Which being done,” she said, “they place a crown of thorns on His head. Those thorns pierced and pained intensely that venerable head, and the blood flowed into His eyes and ears, and down on His beard.”

“And then,” she said, “the crown of thorns was pressed down tightly upon His head ; it came down to the middle of the forehead, with many rivers of blood flowing from the punctures down His face, through His eyes, on His face and garments, so that He was not able to see me standing at the foot of His cross except by forcing the blood away from His eyes by the pressure of His eye-lids.”

*The Scarlet Cloak.*—Scarlet clothing, like purple, was held in high esteem on account of the richness of the colour. It first occurs as the hue of apparel (with the exception of Aaron’s “holy garments for glory and for beauty”) in the time of Saul, who is represented by David as having clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet.

Our adorable Lord was in mockery clad in scarlet, in allusion to His kingly pretensions, for the word used is interchangeable with “purple,” which denoted the imperial majesty.† His garment was not that purple, the rich material worn by kings, but a vile old garment of the colour of scarlet.

It is said that Alexander the Great used a purple cloak to indicate that his love for his people was so great, that he was prepared to shed his blood and give his life for them. The garment of this colour worn by our Saviour has indeed this meaning in His sufferings and death. “*Quid enim purpura,*” says St. Gregory the Great, “*nisi cruor et tolerantia passionum amore regni exhibita.*”

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\* Psalms, cxxxii. 2.      † Imp. Bible Dic.

Here we find verified in our Saviour the prophecy of Isaias : *Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bosar, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength ? I, that speak justice, and am a defender to save ? Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press ? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the gentiles is not a man with me. I have trampled on them in my indignation, and have trodden them down in my wrath, and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my apparel.\**

*The Reed in the Right Hand.*—In mockery of the sceptre of a king. Kings, however, hold the sceptre in the left hand, so as to leave the right hand free to impart favours and blessings to the people. Wherefore, then, do they place the reed in His right hand ? St. Jerome gives the answer : “ *Ut sacrilegium Judæorum scriberet.*” That reed designated not only the royal sceptre, but also the pen of a judge, that by it Christ might write the sacrilege of the Jews. The ancients used the reed sometimes for impressing important notices on public monuments. On this occasion, when Christ is mocked and despised, His appearance with the reed in His hand is a strong reproof to the Jews, and to them may be applied the words of Isaias : *Wo to the sinful generation, a people laden with iniquity. They have forsaken the Lord ; they have blasphemed the Holy of Israel ; they have gone away backwards.†*

Ludolph, speaking on this part of the Passion, says :‡ “ Thus three instruments of mockery are brought in, namely, the purple or scarlet garment, the crown of thorns, the reed. The garment is put on His body ; the crown on His head ; the reed-sceptre in His hand. Taken literally, these are three badges of royalty, used in contempt and derision, to show that He was guilty of high treason by wishing to usurp a kingdom, which, however, He was not able to obtain. Taken morally, as Christ was mocked three times§, so

\* Isa. lxiii. 1, et seq. † Isa. i. 4. ‡ Tierce, “ Hours of the Passion.”

§ First, by the servants of the High-priests ; then by the soldiers of Herod, and now by the cohort of Pilate.

the soul is often deluded and taken captive in three ways by sin : First, by the display of human power, typified by the purple and scarlet garments, which are the clothing of kings and potentates. Secondly, by the desire of increasing wealth, shown in the thorny crown ; for riches are full of thorns and cares. Thirdly, by the vanity of earthly wisdom, signified by the reed, which is beautiful, but easily caught by the wind, and worthless ; for earthly knowledge, in which men boast, and which they use not for the praise of God, but for their own, is like a staff made of a reed, which breaks all to pieces."

The rest of this portion of our Saviour's Passion may be briefly told.

After He was scourged, the soldiers led Him into the inner court of the pretorium, and there clothed Him with a purple garment, placed on His head a crown of thorns, put a reed as a sceptre into His hand, and mocked and buffeted Him.

Pilate, who was a spectator of their cruel sport, was deeply moved by the sight of sufferings endured with such uncomplaining resignation, and he determined to make yet another effort to save Christ from death. He led forth Jesus from the inner court, and, protesting once more that he found no fault in Him, presented Him to the people with all the marks of His recent tortures, and still bearing the emblems of His indignity, in the hope that the spectacle could hardly fail to move their hearts to compassion. Pilate saith unto them : *Behold the Man !* As if he would ask in astonishment : Is this a king ?—an insurgent ? Can you still regard Him as dangerous ? How innocent and how miserable ! Is it not enough ?

His appeal is vain ; the priests and their officers renew the cry, *Crucify him, crucify him*. Disappointed and indignant at their implacable spirit, Pilate replied : *Take him you and crucify him, for I find no fault in him*—which some interpret as a fresh ironical reference to their powerlessness to proceed without the governor's

sanction ; while others regard it as a virtual surrender of the case into their hands. "Crucify Him if you will, but do not ask my consent to your act." The Jews now seeing that they cannot prevail on Pilate to sanction the death of Jesus under the Roman law, on the baseless charge of sedition, have recourse to the assertion of their own law, and to their original charge of blasphemy. *We have a law, and according to our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

This mention of such a claim of Christ's, hitherto carefully concealed, affected the mind of Pilate with a mysterious awe. We cannot tell in what sense Pilate conceived the claim, or whether he associated with it aught more than an indefinite impression of some higher power ; but when he recalled his wife's warning and the bearing of the sufferer, and the remark as to a kingdom not of this world, he was the more afraid. He retired again into the pretorium with Jesus, and asked Him : *Whence art thou ?* When Jesus made no reply, with the characteristic pride of a Roman magistrate, Pilate reminded Him that he possessed the power to crucify or to release, whereupon Jesus uttered the memorable answer, so calmly announcing the source of Pilate's authority, and the greater guilt of the agency by which He had been delivered into Pilate's hands : *Thou couldst have no power against me except it were given thee from above ; therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.* These words of majesty and mildness, and almost sympathy for his weakness, induced Pilate yet more earnestly to seek our Saviour's release. But the Jews, irritated by his scruples, now resorted to the threat of accusing him of disloyalty to the Emperor. *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend ; whosoever maketh himself king, speaketh against Cæsar.*

The charge of treason, especially under Tiberius, the risk of losing office, and it might be life itself, Pilate was by no means ready to incur. Accordingly, he again presented Jesus to the



people, and said with irony—embittered, doubtless, by the threat which they had just used—*Behold your king*. But they cried: *Away with him; crucify him*. And when Pilate asked: *Shall I crucify your king?* the Chief-priests filled up the measure of the national guilt by replying: *We have no king but Cæsar*. So Pilate finally gave up Jesus to be crucified.\*

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.

HAVING by clamour and threats obtained the condemnation of Christ, the Jews (J.) *took Jesus, and led him forth*, and they led Him from the tribunal to the pretorium, where (Mt.) *they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him*. (J.) *And, bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified him*. (Mt.) *And going out (of the city), they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon, coming out of the country, (M.) the father of Alexander and Rufus; (Mt.) him they forced to take up his cross*. (L.) *And they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus*. *And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women, who bewailed and lamented him*. But Jesus, turning to them, said: *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children*. *For behold the days shall come wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck*. *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us*. *For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?*

*And there were also two malefactors led with him to be put to death*.

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\* See Imperial Bible Dictionary, under "Pilate."

*Gabbatha, or Lithostrotos.*—The place from which Pilate pronounced the sentence of death was called *Gabbatha*, which means, in Hebrew, *high or elevated*; in Greek, *Lithostrotos*, which means *paved with stones*. It was the name of a place in Pilate's palace from whence he pronounced sentence against our Saviour. It was probably an eminence or terrace; a gallery or balcony paved with stone or marble, and of considerable height.\*

It was close to the pretorium, probably in front of it, and, from having an ornamental or mosaic flooring, it was called emphatically λιθόστρατος, *the pavement*. Platforms with such a pavement might very naturally become common with Roman commanders, since Julius Cæsar was wont to carry about with him pieces of marble ready fitted, that they might be laid down in the pretorium wherever he encamped. Josephus does not mention the place before us by name, but he gives instances of Pilate and other Roman governors seating themselves for judgment in public before the pretorium, or in the market-place.†

In connection with this place, and the pretorium of Pilate, we cannot omit mention of the *Scala Sancta*, or the holy stairs, which our Saviour had to ascend and descend more than once during these scenes of His sufferings, and which were stained with His precious blood.

*The Scala Sancta.*—This was the staircase in Pilate's palace, which was brought to Rome by St. Helena in the year 326, and erected at St. John Lateran.

In the year 850, St. Leo IV. established the devotion of ascending those steps on our knees, and in 1100 Pope Paschal III. renewed this devotion. Pius VII. made the indulgence attached to this devotion applicable to the souls in purgatory.

These stairs could only be ascended on the knees. By constant use they soon began to be worn away, and it was found necessary to cover them with walnut wood, in such a way that the relics may

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\* Calmet's Dic. † Im. Bible Dic.

be seen through the covering. There are twenty-eight steps of white marble. The eight first steps are about ten feet in length, the twenty others not so long, and in depth the steps are all about one and a-half feet, their height being two feet.

Cornelius à Lapide, speaking of the place called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha, says that the place Gabbatha was ascended by a great number of marble steps, which, after they were brought to Rome, and erected near the Basilica of St. John Lateran, are continually visited by a great number of the faithful, and are called Scala Sancta.

These stairs were given in charge to the Passionist Fathers by Pope Pius IX., who erected a retreat for their community at the Scala Sancta, and on the site of the ancient pontifical residence.

In a street opposite to the palace of Pilate, in Jerusalem, Villaumont, a traveller and writer, describes a stairs which he saw there in 1696. The steps were earthen, in the place of the marble steps that were once there before they were transported to Rome; in number and shape and size they corresponded exactly to the steps of the Scala Sancta.

We are now able to form an idea of the place Lithostrotos, or Gabbatha; that place where Pilate pronounced the sentence of death against Christ; and also the stairs of Pilate's palace ascending to the place of the tribunal, or the judgment seat.

We have, after this, to consider the sentence of condemnation, and the cross itself which was placed on our Saviour's shoulder.

*The Punishment of the Cross.*—This kind of punishment was very ancient. It was in use for the most part amongst the Scythians, the Greeks, the Macedonians, the Carthaginians; also amongst the Germans, and very often amongst the Romans, since the foundation of their city. With these it was a punishment special to slaves. It was sometimes inflicted on free men, but these were of the worst description of criminals, such as thieves, assassins, and the like. The caprice of tyrants often led them to

impose this torture on the seditious, on the Christians, and even on women.

In those terrible times there were monsters who are admired and praised in history, who took delight in destroying the lives of their fellow-creatures by this species of torture.

Alexander the Great, after he had taken the city of Tyre, crucified two thousand of the inhabitants.

Flavius Josephus narrates, in his "Antiquities of the Jews," that Alexander, King of the Jews, having taken the town of Betonia, which had often revolted, ordered, in the midst of a debauch, that eight hundred of the inhabitants should be crucified, and, while hanging on their crosses, that their wives and children should be massacred before their eyes.

Cleomeneus, King of Sparta, was flayed alive, and sent to the cross by his son Ptolemy.

In Egypt, after the death of Ptolemy Philopator, Agathocles and his mother were crucified in order to avenge the death of Queen Eurydice.

Xerxes having found among the dead the body of Leonidas, had it beheaded, and the trunk hung on a cross. Augustus, after the war in Sicily, condemned to this punishment six thousand slaves who had not been reclaimed by their masters.

Tiberius crucified the priests of Isis, and destroyed their temple, for having sold Paulina, wife of Saturninus, to a certain Decius. He condemned also a freed woman, who had acted as an intermediary in the transaction.

Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, caused the miserable creatures who fled to the city to escape famine, to be crucified to the number of five or six hundred a day, so that there was no longer sufficient wood left to make the crosses, and the city itself presented the appearance of a forest of crosses. In recounting these atrocities, Josephus tells us that amongst the crucified he recognised three of his friends who were still living, and that he

begged Titus that they might be taken down and their lives saved. Two of them died in spite of all the care bestowed upon them, but the third survived.

The history is given by Justus Lipsius\* of the crucifixion of the virgin Eulalia, of St. Julia, and of six thousand soldiers of Christ and holy martyrs who were sacrificed on Mount Azarath, in Egypt.

Not only sovereigns had the terrible privilege of condemning to the death of the cross ; every slave owner or proprietor could hang upon the cross his human property. Witness that wicked woman who drove her husband to commit this crime, of which Juvenal gives the colloquy in the well-known verse :—

Pone crucem servo—Meruit quo crimine servus  
Supplicium ? Quis testis adest ? Quis detulit ? Audi  
Nulla unquam de morte hominis cunctatio longa est,  
O demens, ita servus homo est ? Nil fecerit, esto.  
Hoc volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas.

This kind of punishment was familiar to the Romans, and it was the most cruel of all for which even profane authors often expressed the greatest sorrow. It was not in ancient times in use among the Jews. They used, in taking away life, stoning, burning alive, strangulation, and more rarely decapitation.

It remained in used in the Roman Empire until the time of Constantine, who was the deliverer of the civilized world. But it may be still found amongst the nations of the East, who have not yet admitted the truths of Christianity.

Amongst the Romans the condemned carried their own crosses. Artemidore and Plutarch attest this, and Plautus says : *Patibulum ferat per urbem, deinde affigatur cruci*. During the carrying of the cross, a man sounding a trumpet preceded the *cortège* to call the people. The executioners cried through the town the cause of the punishment, and to augment the sufferings of the unfortunate criminals, they goaded them on, and they crucified them naked.

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\* I, i. Ch. x. Bosio, "De Cruce Triumphante."

The following dimensions are given concerning the cross of Christ, and are those handed down by tradition :—

It was fifteen feet high, and seven or eight in the transverse beam. This is the measure of the cross of the good thief, preserved in Rome in the Church of Holy Cross-in-Jerusalem.

Calmet says that it would appear, from the circumstances narrated, that the cross was much lower, so that a person speaking from it could be easily heard ; that a soldier's spear could pierce the side of our Lord, and that a reed or cane, in addition to a person's height, could reach His mouth.\*

The wood of the cross was a species of pine, which, though buried in the earth, remained unaltered and uncorruptible for three centuries.

The weight which a man in the condition of our Saviour could carry is computed at 160 lbs., and if we take into account the diminution of weight by the trailing on the ground of the portion of the cross which our Saviour carried, its entire weight, as borne by Him, is computed at 210 lbs.

The cross was put together by means of wooden pegs, according to the usage of the carpenters of that time, without the use of any iron or nails.

It is estimated that a strong man could carry on his shoulder about 210 lbs. weight of wood, with an interval of two or three minutes' rest occasionally ; but without resting he could not carry for the same space of time more than half that weight, that is, 105 lbs.†

As to the form of the cross, we have first to note that crosses of three different shapes are known to have been in use. "One, and that probably the most ancient, was in the form of the letter T, which, as commonly written, consisted of a perpendicular line, with another laid across the top, making two right angles T. In the earlier Christian writers, this letter is often referred to as the

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\* Bible Dictionary.

† These particulars are taken from the "Memoire sur les Instruments de la Passion" (Fleury).



symbol of the cross. . . . The letter X represents another sort, which received the name of St. Andrew, from a tradition that on a cross of this description the Apostle of that name suffered martyrdom. But the commonest form, it is understood, was that in which the upright piece of wood was crossed by another near the top, but not precisely at it, the upright pole running above the other, thus  $\neg$ , and so making four, not merely two, right angles. It was on a cross of this form that our Lord suffered, according to the general voice of tradition; but there is nothing in the narratives of the Evangelists which determines this to have been the form employed, rather than either of the other two. It is, however, the one most commonly met with in the paintings and sculptures that have survived from the earlier ages."\*

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE WAY OF SORROWS.

THE most remarkable of all the relics of the Passion, and the most hallowed, is the ground on which Christ walked from the tribunal of Pilate to Calvary, which was stained by His precious blood. It is no easy matter to find the exact road which He travelled under the weight of His cross; to follow Him along the same way of sorrows; to rest at Calvary, and to terminate the journey at the holy sepulchre. Unfortunately, the traditions relating to this way of sorrows are for the most part modern; that is to say, the stations, as now pointed out, were definitely arranged only in the middle ages. The only points that are known for certain are the Pretorium, which is certainly situated in the tour of Antonia; Calvary, and the Tomb. The rest are conjectural.

The many successive transformations which the holy city has

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\* Imperial Bible Dictionary.

undergone, make it impossible to discover now the exact route. We are lost in a labyrinth of new and modern buildings which interfere with the researches of archæologists. An approximation to these particular points is sufficient for all purposes of devotion, and it may be said that the great fault of archæologists is their desire to fix everything precisely, for a tradition which is true, taking the whole together, may not be complete in all its details. The traditions regarding the scourging, the condemnation, and the *Ecce Homo*, are true in the sense that all happened in the space of a hundred yards or so, but it is impossible to determine now the exact places.

The most reliable information which we have on this subject is the "Way of the Cross," the name given by the Catholic Liturgy to the different parts of the way of sorrows, divided into fourteen Stations, and founded on local traditions. These Stations are:—

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus is laden with the cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time under His cross.
4. Jesus meets His most holy Mother.
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry His cross.
6. St. Veronica wipes with a cloth the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time under His cross.
8. Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls the third time under His cross.
10. Jesus is stripped of His garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross, and laid in the arms of His mother.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Three incidents of this sorrowful journey demand special attention. "Two of them are mentioned in the Gospel; for the third we have no other authority than that pious tradition for which St.

John's Gospel furnishes sufficient grounds. The first of these incidents is that which the sacred text records about certain pious women of Jerusalem.\* Their weeping, and the words of Christ addressed to them, are given by St. Luke : *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*

Tradition also tells us that one of these pious women presented to our Saviour her veil, to wipe away the blood and perspiration from His sacred face ; that it was folded in three, and that upon each fold our Saviour left the impress of His sacred countenance. It is thought that this woman's name was Bernice, or Venice, which came afterwards to be called Veronica, or *true image*, thus applying to her who gave the veil the name of the likeness impressed upon it. These images have been preserved, one in Spain, another in Jerusalem, and a third in Rome.†

The second incident relates to Simon of Cyrene. If we ask in what manner was the intervention of Simon in carrying the cross, we have two suppositions to consider. The sacred text does not say formally whether our Lord was relieved entirely of the burden of the cross, or whether He continued to carry it aided by the Cyrenean. On the first supposition, Christ walked in front, and Simon carried the cross after Him. On the second, He would carry the anterior part, and Simon the hind part, that was before dragging along the ground. SS. Augustine, Jerome, Leo, and Origen, and most modern authors, suppose that our Lord was entirely relieved of the cross. They say that the Greek word *αιρῶν*, translated *tollere* (St. Mark), expresses that the cross was transferred from the one to the other. St. Ambrose, Baronius, and other grave authors, hold the opposite opinion. It makes no difference that the Gospel uses the word *ferre* for *αιρῶν*, to take up, and immediately after the word *portare*, to carry. The cross had fallen, and they forced him to take it up (*angariaverunt ut tolleret*).

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\* The "Passion of our Lord," by the Rev. C. Doyle, O.S.B.

† Ita, R. De Fleury.

No Roman would carry the cross. To do so would dishonour him. The soldiers looked out for some one, and seized on Simon. They were accustomed thus to requisition men and animals for the service of the State. These requisitions were one of the great hardships of which the Jews complained. The Persian monarchs had a service of carriers or post, and these were called *angari*. They were allowed to seize on any horses or equipages they needed; to demand entertainment where they came, free of expense; and this proved a great grievance. The word passed into use amongst the Greeks (*ἀγγαρεύειν*), and the Romans exercised pretty freely the same rights of requisitioning. The soldiers, therefore, placed the cross on Simon's shoulders, that he might carry it after Christ. The Roman Liturgy follows the tradition, and the more solid opinion that the weight of the cross was shared.

The third incident is "that tradition which tells us that the Mother of Jesus, led and protected by the beloved disciple, stood by the wayside to catch a glimpse of her only One as He went to death. This is, to say the least of it, very likely, since she must have trodden that way of sorrows to stand as she did by the cross of Jesus." \*

This meeting between the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son is mentioned by St. Bonaventure, in his "Life of Christ," and by St. Bridget, in her "Revelations," where she says that the Blessed Virgin was present when Christ was scourged, and when He carried His cross, and when He was crucified. Since this last fact is mentioned in the Gospel, we may well suppose the truth of this tradition. It is very likely that long before He was condemned to death, the Blessed Virgin came forth from her home, that she might see Him, moved as she was with vehement love and sorrow. On hearing the sentence of His condemnation, she would naturally hasten along to the place of execution, that she might meet Him on the road or at the place. She did meet Him. He raised His

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\* Rev. C. Doyle.

weak head and looked into her face. Their eyes at that moment met, and the sword of sorrow, foretold by Simeon, entered into her soul.

The best meditation that I can suggest on this portion of the Passion is included in the devotion of the *Via Crucis*, the Stations, or the "Way of the Cross."

I extract from that authentic work, the "Raccolta," the explanation which follows of the history and the nature of this devotion:—

"Among those devotional exercises which help us to meditate upon the Passion, Cross, and Death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (the sovereign medicine for the conversion of sinners, for the renovation of the tepid, and for the sanctification of the just), one of the chief has ever been the exercise of the Way of Calvary, commonly called the *Via Crucis*. This devotion continued, in an unbroken tradition, from the time Jesus Christ ascended into heaven. It arose first in Jerusalem, amongst the Christians who dwelt there, out of veneration for those sacred spots which were sanctified by the sufferings of our divine Redeemer; and from the very times of the Gospel, as we learn from St. Jerome, Christians were wont to visit the holy places in crowds; and the gathering of all persons, he says, even from the farthest corners of the earth, to visit the holy places continued to his own times.

"From Jerusalem this devout exercise was introduced into Europe by various pious and holy persons, who had travelled to the Holy Land to satisfy their devotion. Amongst others, we read of the Blessed Alvarez, of the Order of Friars Preachers, who, after he returned to his own Convent of St. Dominic, in Cordova, built several little chapels, to serve as so many separate Stations, in which he had painted the principal events which took place on our Lord's way to Mount Calvary. Afterwards, more formally, the Fathers Minorite Observants of the Order of St. Francis, as soon as ever, on the foundation of their order, they were introduced into the Holy Land, and more especially from the time, that is in

the year 1342, they had their house in Jerusalem, and the custody of the sacred places, began both in Italy and elsewhere (in short, throughout the whole Catholic world) to spread the devotion of the *Via Crucis*. This they did by erecting in all their own churches fourteen separate Stations, in visiting which, it was said, that 'the faithful, like the devout pilgrims who go in person to visit the holy places in Jerusalem, do themselves also make this journey in spirit, whilst they meditate on all that our Lord Jesus Christ vouchsafed to suffer for our eternal salvation at those holy places in the last hours of His life.'

"This wholesome devotion has met with the repeated approval of the Holy Church; in the Constitutions, for instance, of the venerable Pontiff, Innocent XI., of Innocent XII., of the two Benedicts XIII. and XIV., and of Clement XII. By this last Pope it was extended to the whole Catholic world, and it is now in constant use with persons of every quality, being, moreover, enriched with most numerous indulgences. For instance, those who perform devoutly the *Via Crucis* may gain all the indulgences which have ever been granted by Popes to the faithful who visit in person the sacred places in Jerusalem. All, however, who wish to gain these indulgences by means of this devotion, must bear in mind that it is indispensably required of them to meditate, according to their ability, on the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to go from one Station to the other, so far as the number of persons engaged in the devotion, and the space where the fourteen Stations are erected, will admit. So much is evident from the Apostolical Constitutions above named. This, then, is all that is required for the indulgences, and so the words, *Adoramus te, Christe, &c.*, the *Pater noster*, the *Ave Maria*, with the *Miserere nostri, Domine*, are nothing more than a pious and praiseworthy custom introduced by devout persons into the devotion of the *Via Crucis*. This the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences itself declared in their Instructions for performing the exercise



of the *Via Crucis*, Nos. 6 and 9, published by order of and with the approbation of Popes Clement XII., April 3rd, 1731, and Benedict XIV., May 10th, 1742. These instructions, by the way, prohibit all catechists, preachers, and others from specifying the indulgences which may be gained by the devotion of the *Via Crucis*, and bid them confine themselves in this respect to whatever the before-named Popes have declared and confirmed on this subject.

“All, however, who are sick, or in prison, or at sea, or *in partibus infidelium*, or prevented in any other way from visiting the Stations of the *Via Crucis* erected in churches or public oratories, may gain the said indulgences by reciting fourteen *Pater nosters* and fourteen *Ave Marias*; at the end of these, five *Pater nosters* and five *Ave Marias*, and five times *Gloria Patri*, and one *Pater, Ave*, and *Gloria* besides for the Pope; holding in their hands the while a brass\* crucifix which has been blessed by the Most R<sup>ev</sup>. the Father-General of the entire Order of the Friars Minor Observants, at the Convent of *Ara Cœli*, or also by the Father Provincial, or any Father Guardian, subject of the said Father-General.† . . . It is also to be observed that these crucifixes, so indulgenced, after they have been blessed, cannot be sold or given away, or lent to anyone for the purpose of enabling them to gain the indulgences of the *Via Crucis*, as appears from repeated decrees to this effect of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences.”‡

I may conclude this chapter by an extract from the letter which Adrichomius has written respecting the progress to Calvary from Pilate's hall, in his work, entitled “Theatre of the Holy Land,” as given in “The History of the Passion,” by De la Palma:—

“From the palace of Pilate to the place where the cross was fixed, is one thousand three hundred and twenty-one paces, or, according

\* The crucifix need not necessarily be brass.

† Or any priest with delegated authority from the Pope or the General of the Franciscans.

‡ The “*Raccolta*,” translated by Fr. Ambrose St. John, 1861.

to another computation, three thousand three hundred and three feet. Our Saviour, beginning His progress from the palace of Pilate, at the distance of twenty-six paces, or sixty-five feet, reached the place where the cross was placed on His shoulders. From thence, dragging His cross for eighty paces, or two hundred feet, He reached the place where, according to tradition, He fell the first time with the cross. Distant from there some sixty paces and three feet, or one hundred and twenty-three feet, is the place where the Blessed Virgin, with the Apostle St. John, met her Son. And distant from there seventy-one paces one foot and a-half, or a hundred and seventy-nine feet, He reached a place where three roads meet, where Simon the Cyrenean was made to carry the cross. From thence a hundred and ninety-one paces and half-a-foot, or four hundred and seventy-eight feet further on, He was met by Veronica. From thence to the gate of the city, which was called Judiciaria, is three hundred and thirty-six paces and two feet, or eight hundred and forty-two feet, where He fell a second time with the cross. From thence there is a gradual rise up a stony track towards the north, and proceeding three hundred and forty-eight paces and two feet, or eight hundred and seventy-two feet, the place is reached where He spoke to the weeping women. Going on a hundred and sixty-one paces one foot and a-half, or four hundred and four feet, He arrived at the brow of Calvary, where He fell for the last time. Eighteen paces, or forty-five feet, from there, is the place where the executioners unclothed Him, and gave Him to drink of wine mingled with myrrh and gall. Twelve paces, or thirty feet, still further is the place where He was nailed to the cross. And finally, at fourteen paces, or thirty-five feet distance, is the place where the cross was raised and fixed."

D<sup>e</sup> la Palma continues: "This the above-named author states, from which we may perceive with how much piety he travelled along this road, since he has given such a minute account of every

step of it; and the knowledge of how many paces, more or less, it was divided into, will aid us in our meditation, and enable us to form a better idea of the place where all these events happened."

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### CHRIST ON CALVARY—HIS CRUCIFIXION.

(L.) *And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, (Mt.) they gave him wine to drink, mingled with gall, and when he had tasted, he would not drink. (M.) And they crucified him. . . And with him they crucified two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. (J.) And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This title, therefore, many of the Jews did read; because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. Then the Chief-priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not the King of the Jews, but that he said: I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written. (Mt.) And after they (the soldiers) had crucified him, they divided his garments. (J.) And they made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They have parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots. And the soldiers indeed did these things. (Mt.) And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy own self. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the Chief-priests,*

*with the Scribes and Ancients, mocking, said: He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. (L.) And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him.*

*(L.) And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And one of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed him, saying: If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*

*(J.) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.*

*(L.) Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour.*

*(M.) And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

*(J.) Afterwards Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar; and they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth. (Mt.) In the meantime the others said: Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him. (J.) Jesus therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated. (L.) Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. (J.) And, bowing his head, he gave up the ghost.*

In this part of the history of the Passion, we have first to consider the place called *Calvary*, or *Golgotha*.

In my notice of this place, I take my information from Calmet's Dictionary :—

"*Calvary*," or *Golgotha*, that is, *the place of a skull*, a little hill, north-west of Jerusalem, and so called, it is thought, from its skull-like form."

Origen, Epiphanius, and Jerome, and a great number of others, hold that Adam was buried on Calvary; and there is a chapel dedicated to him, but the place need not derive its name from the fact that his skull was found there.

Calvary formerly stood outside the walls of Jerusalem, and was the spot on which our Saviour was crucified. When Barchochebas revolted against the Romans, Adrian, having taken Jerusalem, entirely destroyed the city, and settled a Roman colony there, calling it *Ælia Capitolina*. The new city was not built exactly on the ruins of the old, but further north, so that Calvary became almost the centre of the city of *Ælia*. Adrian profaned the Mount, and particularly the place where Jesus had been crucified and His body buried; but the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, erected over the spot a stately church, which is still in being. This is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in which the following places are pointed out:—Where Jesus was stripped of His garments, and received the bitter draught of vinegar and gall; where He was nailed to the cross; where He died; where He was taken down from the cross, and where He was placed in the tomb.

As to the authenticity of these holy places, it may be well to show how the tradition in regard to them has been preserved, and for this purpose I must refer to their history.

"It is certain," says Calmet,\* "that many thousands of strangers resorted every year to Jerusalem for purposes of devotion, who

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\* Bible Dic.

would find themselves interested in a more than ordinary degree in the transactions which that city had lately witnessed, and with the multitudinous reports concerning them, which were of a nature too stupendous to be concealed. The language of St. Luke\* plainly implies wonder that so much as a single pilgrim to the holy city could be ignorant of later events; and St. Paul appeals to Agrippa's knowledge that 'these things were not done in a corner.' It is, in short, impossible that the natural curiosity of the human mind—to adduce no superior principle—should be content to undergo the fatigues of a long journey to visit Jerusalem and yet, when there, should refrain from visiting the scenes of the late astonishing wonders. So long as access to the temple was free, so long would Jews and proselytes from all nations pay their devotions there; and so long would the inquisitive, whether converts to Christianity or not, direct their attention to Mount Calvary, with the garden and sepulchre of Joseph. The Apostles were at hand to direct all inquirers; neither James nor John could be mistaken; and during more than thirty years the localities would be ascertained without a doubt by the participators and the eye-witnesses themselves. Though the fact is credible, yet we do not read of any attempt of the rulers of the Jews to obstruct access to them, or to destroy them; but it is likely that they might be in danger on the breaking out of the Jewish war (A.D. 66), and especially on the circumvallation of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). The soldiers of Titus, who destroyed every tree in the country around to employ its timber in the construction of their works, would effectually dismantle the garden of Joseph; and we cannot from this time reckon with any certainty on more of its evidence than what was afforded by the chambers cut into the rock, and possibly the portal or monument annexed to them.

"At the time of the commotions in Judea, and the siege of Jerusalem, the Christians of that city retired to Pella, beyond the

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\* St. Luke, xxiv. 28.



Jordan. These must have known well the situation of Mount Calvary ; nor were they so long absent as might justify the notion that they could forget it when they returned, or that they were a new generation, and therefore had no previous acquaintance with it. They were the same persons ; the same Church officers, with the same bishop at their head, Simeon, son of Cleophas ; and whether we allow for the time of their absence two years, or five years, or seven years, it is morally impossible that they could make any mistake in the matter. Simeon lived out the century, and from the time of his death to the rebellion of the Jews under Barchochebas was but thirty years—too short a period certainly for the successors of Simeon at Jerusalem to lose knowledge of places adjacent to that city.

“It is worth our while to examine the evidence in proof of the continued veneration of the Christians for the holy places, which should properly be divided into two periods : the first to the time of Adrian’s *Ælia* ; the second, from that time to the days of Constantine. St. Jerome, writing to Marcella concerning this custom, has this remarkable passage : ‘During the whole time, from the ascension of our Lord to the present day, through every age as it rolled on, as well bishops, martyrs, and men eminently eloquent in ecclesiastical learning, came to Jerusalem, thinking themselves deficient in religious knowledge unless they adored Christ in those places from which the Gospel dawn burst from the cross.’ It is pleasing to think that the leading men in the early Christian community were thus diligent in acquiring the most exact information. They spared no pains to obtain the sacred books in their complete and perfect state, and to satisfy themselves by ocular inspection, so far as possible, of the truth of those facts on which they built the doctrine delivered to their hearers. So Melitus, Bishop of Sardis (A.D. 170), writes to Onesimus : ‘When I went into the East, and was come to the place where those things were preached and *done*.’ So we read that Alexander,

Bishop of Cappadocia (A.D. 211) *going to Jerusalem for the sake of prayer, and to visit the sacred places*, was chosen the Bishop of that city. This seems to have been the regular phraseology on such occasions ; for this cause Sozomen ascribes the visit of Helena to Jerusalem, ‘for the sake of prayer and to visit the sacred places.’

“This may properly introduce the second period in this history, on which we lay great stress ; it is no longer the testimony of friends—it is the testimony of enemies : it is the record of their determination to destroy to their utmost every vestige of the Gospel of Christ. On that determination we rest our confidence ; they could not be mistaken, and their endeavours guide our judgment.

“St. Jerome says,\* ‘From the time of Hadrian to that of the government of Constantine, about the space of 180 years, in the place of the resurrection was set up an image of Jupiter ; in the rock of the cross a marble statue of Venus was stationed, to be worshipped by the people, the authors of these persecutions supposing that they should deprive us of our faith in the resurrection and the cross, if they could but pollute the holy places by idols. Bethlehem, now our most venerable place, and that of the whole world, of which the psalmist sings, *Truth is sprung out of the earth*, was overshadowed by the grove of Thammuz, *i.e.*, of Adonis ; and in the cave where once the Messiah appeared as an infant, the lover of Venus was loudly lamented.’ This is a general account of facts ; a few additional hints may be gleaned from other writers. Socrates † says :—‘Those who followed the faith of Christ, after His death, held in great reverence (or worshipped) the monument of that wonderful work ; but those who hated the religion of Christ, filled up the place with a dyke of stones, and built in it a temple of Venus, with a figure standing up on it, by which they intended to dissipate all recollection of the holy place.’

“Sozomen is more particular. We learn from him that ‘the

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\* Ep. 13 ad Paulim. † Hist. Eccle. lib. 1, cap. 17.

gentiles, by whom the Church was persecuted in the very infancy of Christianity, laboured by every art and in every manner to abolish it; the holy places they blocked up with a vast heap of stones, and they raised that to a great height which had before been of considerable depth, as it may now be seen; and, moreover, the entire place, as well of the resurrection as of Calvary, they surrounded with a wall, stripping it of all ornament. And, first, they overlaid the ground with stones, then they built a temple of Venus on it, and set up an image of the goddess, their intention being that whoever there adored Christ, should seem to be worshipping Venus; so that in process of time the true cause of this worship in this place should be forgotten, and that the Christians, practising this, should become also less attentive to other religious observances, while the gentile temple and image worship should be, on the contrary, established.'

"It is evident that if the rock of Calvary and the holy sepulchre were surrounded by the same wall, as Sozomen asserts, they could not be far distant from each other; and this wall, with the temples and other *sacra* it enclosed, would not only mark these places, but, in a certain sense, would preserve them, as the mosque of Omar preserves the site of the temple of Solomon at this day.

"On the whole, we are called upon to admire the proofs yet preserved to us by Providence, of transactions in these localities nearly two thousand years ago—facts which for centuries employed the artifices and the power of the supreme government in Church and State, of the Jewish hierarchy, and of the Roman emperors to subvert, to destroy the evidences of; yet the evidences defied their malignity;—of the barbarians, Saracens, and Turks to demolish; but they still survive;—of heathen philosophy and *soi-disant* modern philosophy to annul; but in vain. The labours of Julian the Apostate to rebuilt the temple, continue almost living *witnesses* of his discomfiture. The sepulchres of the soldiers who fell in assaulting Jerusalem remain *speaking* evidences

of the destruction of the city according to prediction by the Romans. The holy sepulchre stands a traditional memorial of occurrences too incredible to obtain credit, unless supported by superhuman testimony. Or, if that be thought dubious, Mount Calvary certainly exists, with features so distinct, so peculiar to itself, and so unlike everything else around it . . . that we have only to compare the original records of our faith with circumstances actually existing, to demonstrate that the works on which our belief rests were actually written in the country, at the times, and by the persons, eye-witnesses, which they purport to be."

This digression is given here for the purpose of refuting the objections sometimes raised against the genuineness of the holy places, as they are now regarded by us and by all Christians. Having referred to this line of proof once, it will not be necessary to deal with them again when speaking of the holy sepulchre, or the other localities that may be mentioned in the course of this work.

We may now proceed to consider some of the details of the crucifixion.

*The Erection of the Cross.*—Sometimes the victim was attached to the cross on the ground, and then it was elevated with its burden; sometimes the cross was first erected, and then the victim attached to it with cords and then with nails.

The first was the manner employed on Calvary, according to the more probable opinion. The reasons for this opinion are:—  
1st. Because the place of crucifixion is pointed out at some paces distant from the place in which the cross was erected. 2nd. Because it is a sentiment more in accordance with the thoughts and meditations of the faithful on the Passion. 3rd. Because it was a more easy and expeditious manner of crucifixion than the other. Father Niquet\* confirms this opinion by a passage in the acts of the martyr, St. Pionius: "He willingly divested himself of

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\* "De Sancta Cruce," p. 132.

his clothes, and, looking up to heaven, gave thanks to God. Then he stretched himself on the wood, and delivered himself up to the soldiers, that he might be crucified with nails . . . and then they raised him up, fastened to the wood."

*The Manner in which He was Fastened to the Cross.*—The crucified were often fastened by nails. The Greeks called crucifixion, *clavifixio*, i.e., fastening by nails. Demosthenes, in a passage quoted by Ulpian (a French writer), tells us that the victims condemned to this punishment were fastened by nails. When Titus caused a great number of Jews to be crucified, the Roman soldiers amused themselves by driving in the nails in different ways, thus torturing by a variety of punishments, according to the dispositions of the executioners.

In the dialogue of Lucian, relative to the crucifixion of Prometheus, Mercury says to him: "*Præbe dexteram. Tu autem, Vulcane, astringe, et confige, et malleum fortiter demitte. Da et alteram quo illa etiam recte astringitur.*"\* He continues the same description concerning the nailing of the feet.

We read in Plautus: "*Ego dabo ei talentum, primus qui in crucem excucurrerit, sed ea lege ut affigantur his pedes, his brachia.*"

From this an author named Justus Lipsius thought that the nails were driven through the wrists, and not in the hands, supposing that the hands could not bear the weight of the body. This is only his opinion. The Prophet Zachary† writes: *What are these wounds in the midst of thy hands?* And the Gospel leaves no doubt on this subject, in the words of our Saviour to St. Thomas: *See my hands; see my feet.* Not, *see my wrists*, for the wounds.

Before nailing the feet, holes were pierced through them by a sharp iron instrument. This is still done amongst the Japanese in the punishment of impalement, and also in ordinary crucifixion.

We may quote a description of crucifixion in Japan, as given by

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\* Lamy, p. 578. † Ch. xiii. 6.

the Jesuit Father Fröis :—" Their crosses are transverse ; the cross-beam inserted into the erect beam. There is a piece of wood to support the feet, as is seen in some old images of the crucifix and ancient medallions. They attach another piece of wood higher up on the beam, on which the person crucified can sit. They fasten the victims with cords, or iron manacles, instead of nails, and not only the hands, but also the arms. They fix the feet on their support with chains, not one over the other, but side by side, after the manner of a man standing upright. They leave on their clothes, and fasten them to the cross on the ground, and then the executioners raise them up with torture. Soon they are pierced with the thrust of a lance, and thus death is caused."

*Death on the Cross.*—The Jews sometimes attached the dead bodies of criminals to the cross, but they never left them hanging on after sunset. The Romans, more cruel, condemned the living to this punishment, and left them to perish miserably of hunger, thirst and exhaustion. Their bodies became the prey of vultures and of dogs, and were generally destroyed by putrefaction.

Cicero gives the beautiful words of the Philosopher Theodore of Cyrene, in his reply to the threat of the tyrant Lysimachus : " It matters little whether one is to rot in the air or in the earth."

The cross was the tomb of the victim. Plautus makes out a poor slave saying : "*Noli minitari, scio enim crucem futurum mihi sepulchrum; ibi majores mei sunt, pater, avus, proavus, abavus.*"

Death was caused either by loss of blood or by hunger. There were some crucified who lived on their crosses two or three days, and who could even speak. Timotheus and Maura, who were crucified together towards the year 286, lived nine days on their crosses. Nothing can be more touching than the history of these two mutually encouraging each other to suffer. Maura said : " I am only 17 years of age. I fear that before the governor the horror of the torture may make me fail." " Pray God, my sister," said her husband (they had been married only twenty days), " and



God will give you courage." The same martyrs, although crucified, had been subjected to the most terrible tortures.

The governor, Arianus, exhausted on Maura the rigour of his cruel torments without exciting any pity in the bloodthirsty crowd that was assembled. At length he ordered her to be crucified before the eyes of her spouse. On her way to the cross she met her mother, who made a last effort to make her yield ; but Maura, withdrawing herself from her embrace, placed herself upon the cross, and prayed not to be prevented from dying soon the death of Christ.

"Then they crucified them facing each other, and they were on the cross nine days and as many nights, comforting one another by mutual exhortation."\*

*The Wine, Myrrh and Gall.*—When Jesus arrived on Calvary, they gave him wine mingled with gall, or with myrrh, as St. Mark says.

The wine mingled with myrrh was given by the Jews, according to their custom, before a criminal was executed, in order to accelerate death, or to render the condemned person insensible to the sufferings. Hence, our Saviour having tasted it, would not drink it. This is not the same kind of drink as that which, according to St. Luke and St. John, was presented by the soldiers to Christ when He cried out : *I thirst*. The first was given before His crucifixion, and was wine ; the second was vinegar. According to the Evangelists, the wine was mingled with gall.

*The Nails that Pierced His Hands and His Feet.*—It is certain that nails were employed in the crucifixion of Christ, and we have here to consider their number and size.

On the question of the number of nails actually used, unfortunately we find authors and artists differing, in the same manner as they do on the question of the form of the cross. Some suppose four nails, and some only three. The weight of authority is on

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\* Bollandists, die 3 Maii.

the side of those who hold that there were four nails. Profane authors say that four nails were used in crucifying. This is clear from the passage of Plautus, above quoted : "*Affigantur bis pedes, bis brachia.*" The excavations in recent years made under the Church of St. Clement, in Rome, discovered many ancient paintings, and amongst them one of the crucifixion, with feet separated. All the Greek paintings represent our Saviour crucified with four nails.

In an ancient gradual of St. Gregory, in the eleventh century, there are miniature representations of the crucifix with four nails.

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who was martyred in 249; Rufinus, a doctor of the Church in the fourth century; Theodoret, Bishop of Cyr, in Syria, who flourished in the beginning of the fifth century; St. Augustine, in 430; Innocent XIV. (1200); Cardinal Baronius, and Cardinal Folet, in the sixteenth century, are all in favour of four nails.

St. Gregory of Tours, in his book on the glories of the martyrs, thus expresses himself : "Two nails fastened their hands, and two their feet."

The Abbé Martigny says\* that Cimabue and Margatone were the first to take the license, in their large painted crucifix, retained in the Church of the Holy Cross, at Florence, to place one foot over the other, and to represent them as fastened to the cross with one nail. This was towards the end of the thirteenth century. This usage Italy adopted, and by degrees it found its way into and prevailed in France and Spain.

It is mentioned, as a further proof for the use of the four nails, that those skilled in such matters say that both feet could not be nailed together without breaking the bones, and the bones of our Saviour's feet were certainly not broken. I need not go further into this discussion, inasmuch as the motives of piety are sufficient in either supposition; but the more accurate the teaching, the more solid the piety grounded upon it.

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\* "Dictionnaire des Antiquités Chrétiennes."

The nails were very large, in order to support the weight of the body, and to open the wounds into which St. Thomas could put his fingers.

St. Gregory of Tours says of them : "The goodly, and of all kinds of metal the most worthy, namely, the nails of our Lord's cross, were discovered by Queen Helena after the invention of the Holy Cross."

*The Title placed over the Cross.*—In the history of the Passion we read that a title was placed over the cross of our Saviour. This inscription was intended to make known the cause or reason of His condemnation. It was carried before the condemned person, or attached to his neck. Sometimes they substituted for it a proclamation by a crier, who publicly announced the name of the criminal and the sentence of judgment or justice. It was prepared when our Saviour went forth from the pretorium, that it might be carried before Him in the long journey of the Via Crucis. It was not yet fixed on the cross, but it was nailed to it over our Lord's head when He was crucified : *Pilatus in capite ligni clavis tabulum cum nomine regis Judæorum confixit.*

Rufinus, in his ecclesiastical history, tells us that St. Helena discovered the title on the other side of the cross, and about the same time. It cannot be doubted but from that time it began to be venerated, together with the true cross. It has been preserved to us, at least a considerable portion of it, and it is a great happiness for Christians to be able to read that inscription as the seal or stamp of our sacred history.

*Hyssop, Vinegar, and the Sponge.*—These things were employed during the time that Christ was upon the cross.

There is no difficulty about the vinegar and the sponge. The vinegar was near the place of execution ; it served the soldiers as a cooling drink when mixed with water, but it would increase the sufferings of the crucified. Whether this beverage was given to our Saviour by the Roman soldiers or by the Jews, is uncertain.

The question as to the hyssop presents some difficulty. There were, according to Benedict XIV., two kinds of hyssop, the one a kind of useless plant that grew on walls; the other in the fields, to the height of about two feet. We do not know whether the sap of this plant was mixed with vinegar, or whether the stem was used to support the sponge, or whether the little branches of hyssop were woven together so as to contain or support the sponge, or whether it was used as the reed, to reach our Saviour's mouth in giving Him the vinegar.

Father Lamy, in his notes, holds the opinion that hyssop was the reed used, and he proves it from comparing together the different texts of the three Evangelists.

St. Matthew says :\* *One of them filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it on a reed.*

St. Mark :† . . . *filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon a reed.*

In both their texts the sponge is put on a reed, as the Latin word *arundo*, used by St. Matthew, and *calamus*, by St. Mark, may be taken to mean one and the same thing, and are translated as "reed" in the Douay Bible.

St. John, however, says: *And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth.‡* And this *hyssopus* of St. John may be taken to mean the same thing as the *arundo* of St. Matthew, and the *calamus* of St. Mark.

The three Evangelists express the same thought by three separate words. St. Matthew and St. Mark, for the instrument used, express it by the general term, reed; but St. John, who was present, tells us the particular kind of reed, namely, hyssop.

Without going more minutely, or dwelling longer on these particulars, let us turn our thoughts to our Saviour hanging upon the cross.

The cross is erected and fixed in the earth; all its dimensions

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\* St. Matt. xxvii. 28. † St. Mark, xv. 36. ‡ St. John, xix. 29.

and measurements are conformable to tradition, and it was so arranged that the legs of the crucified were sufficiently low to be broken by the soldiers, as in the case of the two thieves ; besides, it had to be inserted rather deep into the ground, in order to support the heavy weight upon it, and to enable them the more easily to erect it to its proper centre.

Our Saviour was low enough to be able to speak with His dying voice to His Mother and the beloved disciple, who stood near the cross.

He was crucified naked ; but Christians, out of respect and modesty, represent our Saviour as decently covered, sometimes from His loins to His knees.

The title was placed over the cross, on the top part of the erect beam, which certainly shows that the cross was transverse, and not in the T form. It is probable that at the deposition it was put on one side with the crown of thorns, the nails, and all the other instruments of the Passion, which were religiously collected and taken care of by the pious women, and preserved amongst devout Christian families until the time of the Invention of the Holy Cross.\*

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### CHRIST DYING ON THE CROSS—HIS LAST WORDS.

WHEN Christ was crucified and raised up on the cross, He began to die. The words, therefore, that He spoke from the cross are the last dying words of our Saviour.

The enemies of Christ spoke, but their words were in mockery and derision. They were words of blasphemy and hatred : *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross, and then we will*

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\* The particulars in regard to the holy relics are taken from Fleury's work, "Instruments de la Passion."

*believe in thee. He saved others; himself he cannot save. Vah! thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy own self.* On their conduct I need only remark that there is nothing so depraved, or gives so strong a proof of a demoralized heart, as to mock a sufferer, and yet more a dying man.

Christ our Lord, who is the Master and Teacher of all, now speaks from His cross, and, in speaking, teaches the whole world. Hence, according to St. Augustine, He acted like a master speaking from a professorial chair, and the wood from which He hung became the rostrum from which He taught.

The last seven words of Christ are as follows:—

1. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*
2. *Amen I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*
3. *Woman, behold thy son. Son, behold thy mother.*
4. *Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*
5. *I thirst.*
6. *It is consummated.*
7. *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*

Some distinguish eight words, by dividing the third into two; so that, according to this arrangement, Jesus spoke two words for sinners, namely, *Father, forgive them*, and, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*; two for the good, namely, *Woman, behold thy son*, and, *(Son,) behold thy mother*; two for the whole world, namely, *I thirst*, and, *It is consummated*; two for Himself, namely, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me*; and, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*.

We have now to reflect on these seven words, and examine them separately.

*The First Word.*—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (St. Luke, xxiii. 34).

This saying, or prayer, of our Lord may be taken literally, and without any reservation, according to the natural sense of the



words. It is simple and intelligible in its meaning, yet expositors have made difficulties out of the passage. For this reason questions such as the following are proposed :—

1. Whether it was our Lord's desire that His enemies should obtain forgiveness for the great sin they were guilty of in putting Him to death? 2. Whether it was a prayer offered from the cross to commemorate and manifest His love for His enemies, and to exercise His influence with His Father for them? 3. Did it impart to them absolution or remission of their sin?

To these questions distinct answers may be given.

To the first.—It was our Lord's desire to obtain pardon for His enemies, and for all His persecutors to the end of time. Every sin can be pardoned through the merits of Christ's Passion, and that sin of theirs, namely, the sin of deicide, can also be pardoned ; for Christ atoned for it.

To the second.—It was to commemorate and manifest His love, according to the words : *God so loved the world, as to send His only-begotten Son*, &c. It was to teach us a lesson of forgiveness : that lesson, so well learned by His apostles and faithful followers, like the first martyr, St. Stephen, who, when he was being stoned to death, prayed for his executioners in words similar to those uttered by Christ from the cross : *Lord, lay not this to their charge*.

To the third question, it may be answered that our Lord did not there and then absolve His executioners from their sin, as He did the paralytic, when He said : *Thy sins are forgiven thee*. Yet it was the prayer of the eternal High-priest, who had ascended the altar of the cross, and was offering up the sacrifice of Himself to obtain the absolution and forgiveness of His sinful creatures. The High-priest of the old dispensation was a type of Christ dying, when He had to enter the tabernacle, not without blood, for the purpose of offering sacrifice in atonement for the sins of the people.\*

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\* Now our Saviour is fulfilling His high priestly office and enduring a sacrificial death, He was pouring out His precious blood for many unto the remission of sins, the blood that speaketh better than the blood of Abel.

*They know not what they do.* Christ was not accustomed to assign a reason for His petitions on other occasions; now He assigns the ignorance of the Jews and His enemies as a reason for their forgiveness.

We must admit a certain amount of ignorance in those who were the immediate agents in the Passion. St. Peter tells the Jews, speaking of Christ's death, *through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers*; \* and St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, † says that had they known, *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

We may, therefore, suppose the immediate agents in His crucifixion ignorant; and the Jews and their rulers had not a certain knowledge of His divinity, or that He was the Lord of glory. But these rulers of the Jews, together with the Scribes and Pharisees, and the members of the Jewish Council, could not but know that He was the promised Messias. Their ignorance could not exculpate them, for they could, and should, have known that He was innocent; because in Him they saw the divine power manifested and the prophesies fulfilled. Christ, in His last discourse to His disciples, clearly signifies that their ignorance was culpable. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.* ‡ And again: *And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor me.* §

There is another sense in which this ignorance may be here applied, namely, that indicated in the Acts by the words, *the times of this ignorance* ||—to which time the sin of the enemies of Christ belongs. That was the period before Christ, and up to His death, at which, the Apostle says, *God winked.* This period is now vanishing away, and in a very short time will belong to the past; but it is by the guilty act of the Jews, whereby they filled up

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\* Acts, iii. 17.

† ii. 8.

‡ St. John, xv. 22.

§ Ibid. xvi. 3.

|| Acts, xvii. 30.

the measure of their fathers, that it was brought to a close. However, the supreme transgression belongs to the time of ignorance; and, therefore, to all who shared it the saying of St. Matthew was to be applied, that all manner of sin, even blasphemy against the Son of God, would be forgiven through the merits of Christ's Passion.

From this word of our Saviour, we are to learn: First, not to attribute to others evil purposes. To avoid rash judgments and all uncharitableness in our interpretation of the acts of others. Secondly, to consider that many an evil deed may be done through a misguided motive and from a perverted conscience, and will meet with a more lenient judgment from God than from us. Thirdly, the lesson of forgiveness given to all, especially to His disciples, whom He had already admonished that the time would come when *they will put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.\**

*The Second Word.*—*Amen I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise* (St. Luke, xxiii. 43).

This word was spoken to the good thief, in answer to the prayer which he had addressed to our Lord: *Lord, remember me when thou comest to thy kingdom.*

It is certain that one of the malefactors who was crucified with our Lord, was incited to speak blasphemous words against Him: *If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* It is not certain that they both at first blasphemed Him, and that afterwards one of them repented, although some authors hold this opinion. The good thief, if he had blasphemed our Lord at any time, was at last induced to repent, to make his confession, and to ask for pardon. *Neither dost thou fear God,* he said to his companion in suffering,

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\* St. John, xvi. 2, et seq.

*seeing thou art under the same condemnation, and we indeed justly, but this man hath done no evil;* then, turning to Christ, he said, *Lord, remember me, &c.*

This prayer contains a modest and sorrowful act of repentance. He does not ask to be liberated from the cross on which he hung, nor to participate in His kingdom, but only asks to be remembered by Him.

Christ, who seems deaf to all the blasphemies, is most attentive to the prayer of the dying malefactor. After the manner of His dealings with His creatures, He grants more than the sinner asks.

Christ, in His office of priest, absolves him from his sins, and consoles him with the assurance that he would persevere until death in that faith, hope, and repentance which He had infused into Him.

*Amen I say to thee*—that is a form of attestation showing it to be a solemn promise.

*This day*—not merely at some future time, but the day then present, immediately after His death. Thus the promise covers more than the petition, which was only to be remembered at some future indefinite time. In the further examination of the import of this promise, commentators especially dwell on the words, *thou shalt be with me*, and *in paradise*. We need not say that the first have to be emphasized more than the second. Both deserve special attention.

*Thou shalt be with me*—as if He had said: “Not only will I be mindful of you, but you will be with me, and where I shall be to-day, you will be my companion; never afterwards will you be separated from me.” This He says in the same sense as in another place\* He says: *Where I shall be, there also will be my minister*. “The favour is more abundant than the petition,” says St. Ambrose, “for God always gives more than is asked.”

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\* St. John, xii. 26.

*In paradise*—that is, in the place of rest and happiness where the souls of the just are after death.

The word “paradise,” according to the Greek and Latin signification, and the corresponding word *pardes*, in the Hebrew, means a garden with fruit trees, especially apple trees, as it is translated in Ecclesiastes.\* Hence, the place of delight and pleasure into which God put Adam, is called paradise by the Septuagint, but in the Hebrew is signified by the more general term *gan*, *hortus*, or *garden*, and hence the word was applied to signify that place of happiness and rest in which the souls of the just were detained after death, in the same way as, by a metaphor, the place of the wicked after death is called Gehenna, from the valley of the children of Ennom, near Jerusalem, in which all the offal and filth of the city was continually being consumed by fire.

Paradise, therefore, for the Jews and Christians, means the place of just souls after death, whether it be the Limbo of the Fathers before the resurrection of Christ, or as now, and ever since the resurrection, the kingdom of heaven.

St. Augustine interprets paradise to mean either the bosom of Abraham, or generally the place of just souls after death, which was then the Limbo of the Fathers, called the *bosom of Abraham*, inasmuch as Abraham was the father and head of the just of the old law. This is the meaning to be attached to this promise, namely, that the soul of the penitent thief would on that very day descend with Christ into Limbo, to be numbered with the other just souls that were there awaiting their liberation. It was always a place free from all pain and suffering; a place of rest and happiness, which on that day, by the presence of Christ, and the manifestation of His divinity in it, became a place of still greater happiness and joy to the blessed spirits, and was, therefore, the kingdom of Christ into which the penitent thief was received.

St. Augustine, in his 31st treatise on St. John's Gospel, remarks

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\* ii. 5.

that Christ on the cross signifies what He will do with the living and the dead at the last day, when the former will be placed at His right hand and the latter at His left hand. For the cross is a tribunal, and on it is the Judge, between the two thieves. He on the right repents and believes, and is liberated; the other, on the left, insults, and is condemned.

From this fact of Christ pardoning the thief on the cross, the Church justly and truly teaches, that even in the hour of death God, in His benignity, will not reject a truly penitent soul. He testifies by this public act that He will grant pardon and salvation to all sinners who, like the thief, become converted and turn to Him with sorrow and true repentance. It is true that this thief found a short and an easy entrance into paradise; but we should take care not to abuse this example by putting off our conversion and presuming on a death-bed repentance—that would be rash and dangerous; for a death-bed repentance is a rare gift of God, and much more rare is a repentance joined with such faith as we witness in the case of the good thief, who had no equal in the manner of his conversion.

*The Third Word.*—*Woman, behold thy Son . . . After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother* (St. John. xix. 26, 27).

The circumstances in which this word was spoken are narrated by St. John, who was an eye-witness of all that happened.

He tells us that *there stood by the cross of Jesus*, so that they could see and hear him speaking, *his mother*, the Virgin Mary, *and his mother's sister, Mary* (the wife) *of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.* *When Jesus, therefore, had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved*, that is, John, the son of Zebedee, *he said to his mother: Woman, behold thy son.* He will be to thee for Me in the place of a son; he will fulfil for thee all the duties of a son. *After that he said to the disciple: Behold thy mother.* You will henceforth regard her as your Mother, and have for her, all your days, filial affection, solicitude and reverence. *And from*



*that hour, the disciple took her to his own*, that is, his own home and under his own care. Hence it is understood that St. Joseph was dead before this time, otherwise Jesus would not have committed the care of His blessed Mother to anyone but him.

This was a word of charity and of piety, by which Christ, in His last hour, shows His care and concern for His Mother, and His great compassion for her in her bereavement and sorrow.

It was a word by which our dying Saviour would teach us how to honour our parents.

It was also a mystery by which we are all commended to the care, the protection and intercession of the Blessed Virgin; and by which we are taught to have confidence in her, and in all things to have recourse to her, as to a loving Mother. St. John here represents us all.

Christ does not use the word *Mother*, lest perhaps, according to some, He might afflict still more the heart of Mary. But, according to others, He uses the expression *woman*, rather than *Mother*, because she is *the woman* by excellence, through whom the evil brought on the human race by the first woman was repaired.

She was commended to St. John, because only St. John, of all the Apostles, was present at the cross. By this manifestation of his love and constancy he merited this great privilege and blessing. His singular purity and charity also caused him to be selected to be Mary's earthly guardian after Christ's death.

*And from that hour the disciple took her to his own*, that is, to his own home in Palestine, or Ephesus, or Jerusalem, according as he took up his abode in one or other of these places. He received her as his Mother, given to Him by Christ when dying on the cross.

In like manner we should receive her as our Mother. As our earthly mother gives us our natural and temporal life, so Mary gives us our supernatural and eternal life, who is Christ. As she was, according to nature, the Mother of Christ,

the Head, so she is spiritually the Mother of His members, amongst whom we are, because she co-operates by charity that the faithful be born into the Church, and thus they become members of that body of which Christ is the Head.

Some have endeavoured to prove the glory of the Blessed Virgin in the time of the Passion of Christ, by saying that she alone retained faith, even external faith, and therefore the Church remained only in her. This, they maintain, is confirmed by the ecclesiastical rite during Holy Week, when all the candles except one are extinguished at the Office of *Tenebræ*, and to this same cause they attribute the dedication of Saturday to the Blessed Virgin.

This devised interpretation or explanation is not well founded. It is not commonly admitted that faith and the Church persevered only in our Blessed Lady during the Passion. On the contrary, it cannot be said that the pious women, especially the Magdalen, who accompanied our Lady lost the faith. Neither did the Apostles fail in faith, especially St. John, who remained with Christ till His death. Neither did St. Peter fall into the sin of infidelity; and Christ, after His resurrection, did not blame them all for incredulity, but some only for being stiff-necked. Besides, the Apostles and disciples of Christ, and the pious women who had waited on Him during life, and many also of the Jews, even before the promulgation of the Gospel law, retained the true faith, and the Church lived in them.

The candle preserved at *Tenebræ* signifies the glory of Christ, which survived all the terrors and darkness of His Passion. And St. Peter Damian assigns the reason for dedicating the Saturday, or Sabbath, to the Blessed Virgin: The name signifies "rest," and its dedication to the Blessed Virgin commemorates that rest by which the Son of God took up His abode in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, according to the words: *Qui creavit me requievit in tabernaculo meo*—"He who created me hath rested in my tabernacle."

St. Thomas teaches,\* that at the time of the Passion and Death of Christ, Mary's faith, was the most firm and perfect, but she was not the only one in whom the faith remained. As to the dedication of the Saturday to the Blessed Virgin, the Church wishes this to be done in grateful remembrance of those sorrows which she endured on that Saturday when Christ's body was in the sepulchre, and in honour of the great joy which she had, more than all others, in the thought of His future resurrection on the next day.

No one can fully explain the greatness of Mary's sorrow as she stood at the foot of the cross; but we may form some idea of it by reflecting on some points in connection with this scene :—

First—Her sorrow was great, because of its object. He who suffered was her only Son, and her Son in a special manner. Other sons have a human father as well as a mother; Christ had not a human father, but was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and received a body entirely as to its substance from His Virgin Mother. Hence, He was her Son in a manner above all others. We know how much mothers are afflicted by the sufferings of their sons; how much, therefore, must Mary's heart have suffered during her Son's Passion!

Secondly—The nature of Christ's sufferings. No one else ever suffered, or will suffer, as He did. Pilate thought to move the Jews to compassion by the sight of Christ after He was scourged. What must have been the compassion of His Mother after the crucifixion! If the women of Jerusalem were so moved as to weep and lament over Him, what must have been Mary's grief!

Thirdly—From her presence there. She was an eye-witness of His sufferings. Agar could not bear to see her son die of thirst in the wilderness, but went away some distance from him, saying: *I will not see the boy die.* What wounds must have torn the heart

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\* 3 Dist. 3 qu. 1 a. a. qu. 2, ad. 1.

of Mary when she saw Jesus nailed to the cross, and dying upon it! Some cannot bear to witness the torments even of criminals, but Mary witnessed those of her innocent Son.

Fourthly—The length of time. Many hours intervened from His apprehension till His death.

Fifthly—Her solitude. She had not only no one to console her, but was surrounded by adversaries on all sides—those who continued to mock and rejoice at the sufferings of her Son: John and the few pious women who were present, were too much afflicted to be able to offer her any support or consolation.

Sixthly—She had to listen to the horrible blasphemies and the fearful crimes perpetrated by the Jews against their God, which must have intensely aggravated her sorrow.

Finally—The greatness of her love for her only Son. The greater her love, the greater the bitterness and the pain of her sorrow. St. Gregory remarks that the greatness of the love of God diminished the corporal pains of the martyrs in their sufferings, so that the more fervently they loved God, the less, very often, they felt the torments; but it was not so in the case of the Blessed Virgin, for her sorrow was increased according to the degrees of her love; for her love was the cause of her suffering, and the greater the cause the greater the effect, in which she resembled her suffering Son. In Him love did not diminish His sufferings, as in the martyrs, but rather increased them, and in this, as in everything else, Mary was His most faithful imitator.\*

Ludolph says, in concluding his explanation of this word:—“Let us, therefore, strive, after the example of St. John, to have the Blessed Virgin as a Mother, if we wish to have her also as an advocate. For whereas the state of man is threefold—in life, in death, and after death—so she, in this threefold state, helps her

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\* See a work entitled, “*Commentarii de Beata Virgine Maria*,” by Rev. J. Bucceroni, S.J.

children who look upon her as a Mother. The Church sings of her—

O Mary, Mother of grace,  
Mother of mercy,  
Protect us from the enemy,  
And receive us at the hour of death.

She therefore helps us in life; but some are just, and for those she obtains perseverance in grace—*Mary, Mother of grace*. Others are sinners, and for them she obtains pardon of their sins and mercy from God—*Mother of mercy*. The second state, namely, in death, is full of danger; for many foes, that is to say, devils, approach the dying, and seek to ascertain if they have any authority over them; but the Blessed Virgin protects souls in their death agony, and drives away the enemy, wherefore we go on—*Protect us from the enemy*. The third state, namely, after death, and the departure of the soul, is likewise perilous, for there are roaring fiends seeking to devour the soul; but the Blessed Virgin receives the souls in death and leads them into heaven, wherefore we conclude—*And receive us at the hour of our death*."

*The Fourth Word*.—The fourth word spoken by Christ from the cross is given by St. Matthew: *And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma Sabacthani? that is, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (St. Matt. xxvii. 46).

St. Mark's narrative is the same, with the exception of a slight alteration in the two first words, from *Eli* into *Eloi*, but both expressions signify *my God*, according to Maldonatus; who also thinks that Christ used the word *Eli*, inasmuch as those around understood that he called Elias. Here it is asked: 1. In what language did our Lord speak? and 2. To what nation did they belong who understood not His words?

The answer to the first question is, that the words used were in Syriac, which was the language used by the Hebrews after the Babylonian captivity. It was a mixture of the Hebrew and Chaldaic languages. As to the second question, some, with

Maldonatus, think that they were Romans, who did not know the Hebrew tongue, and because both St. Matthew and St. Mark narrate that the man who gave the vinegar to Christ was one of those who said, *he calleth Elias*. St. Luke writes that the vinegar was given by the soldiers, and it was very likely the Roman soldiers who understood Him to call Elias. Others, however, adverting to the fact that the Romans, and particularly the Roman soldiers, could not know anything about Elias, think that it was the Hellenistic Jews, who knew all about Elias, and who were not well conversant with the Syro-Chaldaic language then spoken, that misunderstood the meaning of our Saviour's words. It is, however, the most probable opinion that it was Jews of Jerusalem, who knew very well the meaning of His words, but who pretended they did not, that they might take even this occasion of deriding Him.

We have now to consider the meaning of the words, or the nature of Christ's abandonment by His Father at that hour. We must guard against the blasphemous interpretation of Calvin, who has written that the words, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* were words of despair, which he tries to prove by saying that, in order to satisfy for us, Christ should experience the full anger and punishment of God, and, therefore, that He should feel the pains of the lost souls, amongst which despair is one of the greatest. This fearful blasphemy, as Benedict XIV. says, refutes itself; for if Christ despaired, He would thereby sin grievously, and, instead of appeasing God, He would rather provoke the divine chastisement. Besides, very soon after, Christ uttered the words: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, which certainly are not the words of a despairing man.

The words, *My God, my God, &c.*, were, therefore, not the expression of despair, but they were words of prayer.

The words are thus commented on by Ludolph: \* "*My God, whose Son I am by nature, inasmuch as I am God; my God,*

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\* "Hours of the Passion"—Sext.



whose Son I am by the union of grace, inasmuch as I am Man, the repetition showing the two-fold nature in Him—*why hast thou forsaken me?* that is, exposed me to torture and death. These words were not uttered by the Godhead, which did not suffer, for the Divinity always remained uninjured through the Passion of Christ (just as if the sun were shining upon the wood, and an axe cut through the wood, the sun would remain uninjured, much more the Divinity of the Word, hypostatically united to the human nature, remains impassible and unharmed while the flesh suffers), but by the humanity, which seemed forsaken, and underwent sorrow, because it was delivered up to death, and suffered—as much as to say: ‘Father, Thou hast so loved the world, that Thou hast delivered Me up for it, and has abandoned Me to the Jews and to death.’ For the Eternal Father withdrew His protection, but did not dissolve the union.”

This fourth word of Christ was a word of great bitterness, for by crying out He shows the extent of His suffering, which was so great that He exclaimed that He was forsaken by His Eternal Father, and in the bitterness of His Passion left without any consolation; for He suffered great bitterness outwardly, but was far more tormented inwardly by reason of His dereliction, and of our ingratitude. Hence, Hugh, of St. Victor, represents Him on the cross speaking thus:—

“ Behold, O man, what I endure for thee;  
 Draw nigh and see the torments racking Me,  
 The cruel nails which pierce My flesh for thee;  
 Yet bitter though the outward be,  
 Far sorer is My grief at finding thee  
 So heedless of My burning love for thee.”

We may conclude with the words of St. Augustine: “ Moreover, thou didst add: *My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* in order to show the efficacy of prayer, which is to be taken as a shield against the darts of temptation in the hour of tribulation. As our Lord Jesus had prayed in the garden, so He prays on the gibbet of the cross, for prayer is truly a defence in time of peril. Go up,

then, my soul, to the fort and tower of prayer, for it is the ointment of the sick, the shield of the weak, the sweet perfume of the citizens of heaven."

From this point, the dereliction of our Lord, we learn that we ought to turn to God in our tribulation, and to bewail our desolation to Him in prayer, as Christ in His anguish and tribulation cried to God the Father, saying: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" \*

✱ *The Fifth Word.—I Thirst.*

This word is given in St. John's Gospel in the following manner: *Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth* (St. John, xix. 28, 29).

*Afterwards*—that is, after He had been three hours on the cross, and death was imminent. *Knowing that all things were now accomplished*—that is, when all things were fulfilled which were predicted concerning Him by the Scriptures, and which His Father had ordained should be accomplished before His death. *That the Scripture might be fulfilled*—that is, the text of the Psalms: † *In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.* It was, therefore, predicted in the Scripture that before His death they would give Him vinegar to drink. But the expression, *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, as used here and elsewhere in the Gospel history, is not to be understood in the sense that because the Scripture said it, Christ must accomplish it; but the Holy Ghost, the Inspirer of the Prophets, foreseeing all the circumstances of the Passion, revealed them. It was foreseen from all eternity what He would accomplish for us in time, and therefore all things that were revealed had to be accomplished.

The Evangelist continues: *Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar.* It does not appear that the vessel of vinegar was set

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\* See "Hours of the Passion," ut supra. † lxxviii. 22.

there on purpose, although Silviero deduces this conclusion from the Latin Vulgate—*Nunc ergo*, &c.; the *ergo*, according to him, insinuates this meaning. It is, however, probable that the executioners were accustomed to refresh themselves with some cooling drink of the kind, and it is certain that this vessel was quite different from the vinegar which was given to Christ before the crucifixion: that was mixed with gall, this was not.

St. Mark says: *And one running, filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon a reed, gave him to drink.* This was necessary, because, as Christ was elevated on the cross, the soldier could not reach a cup to His lips, and had, therefore, to reach a sponge by means of a reed, that His parched lips might be moistened, and that He might extract from the sponge the vinegar which He received.\*

Twice, therefore, on Calvary, they offered our Saviour a drink, once before the crucifixion, and, again, when He signified His thirst from the cross. The first time, when He had tasted, He would not drink, for reasons which are given above. Now, He receives the drink, as is clear from the words of the Evangelist: *Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar.*

Having explained the circumstances in connection with this word, we have now to consider the signification of the word in itself.

It may be considered—First, in its literal sense; and, secondly, in its moral sense.

As to its literal sense, it means that Christ thirsted really and truly with vehement desire for drink. This must have been naturally the case. His whole body was exhausted by the loss of blood. He had passed the whole night in suffering and without sleep. His most bitter torments were calculated to cause the greatest thirst, by which His tongue, and palate, and throat were parched and burning with heat; and thus was fulfilled the predic-

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\* In a former chapter the sponge, reed, and hyssop are noticed.

tion of the Psalmist : \* *My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws, and thou hast brought me down unto the dust of death.* A sorrowful spirit, says the wise man, *drieth up the bones.*

It was a real physical thirst of this nature which Christ suffered on the cross ; but, by His expression of it, we must not understand that He complains, or that He seeks relief from it. No, He had given His body to torment and to death ; and as He did not complain of the cross itself, neither did He complain of any of the pains which He suffered on the cross. And He did not, therefore, devote one of His seven sacred sayings to the relief of a merely physical want. There is, therefore, a deeper and more important meaning contained in this word, which we learn from its moral signification.

It was the thirst of His soul for the salvation of men that He then expressed. As the physical thirst is a painful, natural sensation, occasioned by the absence of moistening liquors from the stomach, and as this sensation is accompanied by vehement desire, so the term is often used in Scripture in a moral sense for a mental desire. Thus it is said in St. Matthew : † *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice ;* and in the Psalms, ‡ *My soul thirsteth for God.* The same figure is employed in the discourse of our Lord with the woman of Samaria : *Whosoever drinketh of the water which I shall give him, shall never thirst.* “An allusion which the woman mistook, as if intended of natural water drawn from some spring possessing peculiar properties” (Calmet). It is in this moral signification that the thirst of Christ on the cross may be interpreted.

St. Bernard observes : “Christ said, ‘I thirst,’ not ‘I suffer.’ O my Lord, for what dost Thou thirst ? ‘For your belief, your salvation, your joy ; I am tormented about your souls more than my own body. If you do not pity Me, at least pity yourselves.’” And

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\* xxi. 16.      † v. 6.      ‡ xlii. 2.

again: "O good Jesus, Thou wearest a thorny crown; Thou art silent concerning Thy cross, and Thy wounds, and only exclaimest about Thy thirst, saying, 'I thirst.' For what, then, dost Thou thirst? Truly, only for the redemption of man and the joy of human salvation."

"By this fifth word," says Ludolph, "we are taught to long for our salvation, and to seek after eternal life. St. Augustine remarks: 'For what dost thou thirst, O Lord Jesus? For wine from the vine, or water from the rock? Thy thirst is my salvation; Thy food is my redemption. Thirst, therefore, my soul, and as *the hart panteth after the fountains of waters*, do thou yearn after Him who thirsteth for thee.' " \*

*The Sixth Word.*—*It is consummated* (St. John xix. 30).

St. Leo says that by this word Christ signified that all the prophecies were fulfilled, and all the sufferings had been endured by which the human race was redeemed. Not as the Lutherans and Calvinists have taught, that all sacrifices were at an end, and that none should be offered in future. It is true that all the sacrifices of the old law were abolished, and that sufficient atonement was made for the sins of the world; but not that the Holy Sacrifice of Calvary was not still to be offered in the Mass; or that Christ's satisfaction should not have to be applied to our souls through His sacraments; or that we should not make satisfaction to God for our own sins by works of penance, and not by faith alone.

*When, therefore, Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated.* By this word, our Saviour did not speak of any one particular thing which was accomplished, but in a universal and absolute sense of all things which He came on earth to do. Nothing now remained to be done except to die.

I do not, therefore, intend to enumerate here all that Christ had done up to that moment on the cross; that would be to go through His whole life, and would embrace the whole of the Old and New

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\* See "Hours of the Passion" (Sext).

Testaments. I shall only dwell upon the work itself for which Christ came on earth, and for which He suffered and died, namely, the work of man's redemption—that which Christ Himself had referred to so often, and especially by the words : *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized : and how am I straightened until it be accomplished ?\**

The work to be accomplished was that of man's redemption. This was a twofold work—a work of merit and a work of satisfaction. He had to purchase grace and the glory of heaven for us by His merits, and He had to pay the debt due for our sins by His sufferings and death. To understand this twofold work which the Redeemer of the world had to accomplish, we have to consider the *merits* and *satisfactions* by which we are redeemed.

*The Merits of Christ.*—In order to understand this, it is necessary to refer to the state of misery in which we were, and the state to which we have been raised.

Merit is a work worthy of reward. With God it must be supernatural, as His reward is supernatural. Christ's merit consisted in that service or work which He offered to His Father, which was worthy of a supernatural recompense. The gift corresponding to merit is called reward. The rewards purchased for us by our Saviour are the supernatural gifts of His grace here, and of His glory hereafter. We have been raised from that state of fallen nature into which the human race had been thrown by the sin of Adam ; from that state of ignorance and idolatry into which the pagan world had plunged itself ; and we have been raised to the state of repaired nature, to a state of faith and true religion, to a state of Christianity in which we can obtain all graces, and all the means necessary for our salvation. This was the work of Christ, which could only be accomplished by Him, and which is attributed to the merits of His Passion. This was a work of infinite value, because Christ's actions were those of

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\* St. Luke, xii. 50.



a God, and, therefore, infinitely meritorious. No creature could purchase those heavenly gifts, were it not for Christ's Passion. It is true that every action of His life was infinitely meritorious, and would have been sufficient to save mankind, had it been so ordained by Christ. But our Saviour did not wish that they should be applied separately, but that all His actions should be united and offered together in His Passion, so that His whole work, and all that He came on earth to perform, might be completed in His Passion, in that sacrifice and immolation of Himself as a victim to His eternal Father. In thus offering Himself He redeemed us, and in redeeming us merited for us our sanctification and salvation. It is this work which is now consummated on Calvary.

It was also, as I have said, a work of *satisfaction*. Christ, by the same actions by which He merited for us our liberation and exaltation, also satisfied for us. The same works of Christ were both meritorious and satisfactory; meritorious, inasmuch as they were worthy of reward; and satisfactory, inasmuch as they paid the debt contracted by sin.

The satisfaction of Christ, to be full and complete, had to effect three things. It must pay the debt of sin, that of original sin, as well as of all actual sins; it must appease the just anger of God and expiate the guilt. He performed this threefold work by accepting the weight of the sins of the whole world in the sense in which it is expressed in the holy Scriptures, when it is said that *God had placed upon him the iniquity of us all*; and that *truly he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities; he was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.\**

In His Passion He offered Himself to the divine justice to be punished for the infinite malice and offence of our sins. He

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\* Isaias, liii. 4, 5.

offered Himself to be punished as all the sins of men required, in order that atonement might be made to the Divine Majesty. And how He was punished, we learn from the sad history of His bitter Passion; and especially from the suffering He endured on the cross, when He cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

It was in sorrow, in sufferings, and in death that Christ appeased the anger of God towards man; it was through these same means that He made atonement for our sins, and washed out their guilt and the stains contracted by them. It is in His blood that our sins are washed out, and through the shedding forth of that blood that our redemption was effected.

This, then, is the work that was finished or consummated—the work of redemption—a redemption in its true and real sense, and not in the imperfect sense of the Pelagians and Socinians; a redemption offered for all men, and not alone for the elect and the predestined; a redemption that was not merely impetratory, but *soluto pretio* (the price being paid). He paid the price of it by meriting and satisfying for us. He had rescued us from the servitude of sin and Satan. He had made us participators of the friendship of God and of eternal life. He had offered a superabundant and infinite satisfaction for sin, as the one Mediator of God and men, *the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all*,\* that, in the words of St. Peter † we are admonished: *Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.*

By this Sixth Word, *It is consummated*, Christ signified that He had finished all things which it behoved Him to do; and as we have considered the outline of His work of infinite mercy and love, let us say to Him according to our devotion: “O Jesus, our Saviour, the Finisher of that glorious work Thou didst receive from

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\* 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.      † 1 Peter, i. 18, 19.

Thy Father to accomplish, Thou who didst begin Thy work with much toil, and didst finish it with intense suffering, and didst at last offer up the consummation of Thy whole Passion collectively to God the Father, saying, ‘It is consummated,’ blessed, O Lord, for this be Thy holy Name, that Thou hast made this consummation that we may have a good end, and that all our enemies may be consumed. I beseech Thee, grant that I may fulfil Thy commandments, and may advance in virtue pleasing to Thee, and through Thee to God the Father, so that at the hour of my death I may be able to say : ‘Behold, O Lord, I have finished and perfected the work which Thou hast given me to do, and now I come unto Thee, my Master, and my Lord Jesus Christ.’ And then may I be found worthy to see Thee *face to face*, Thee, the end of all perfection.”\*

*The Seventh Word.*—*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (St. Luke, xxiii. 46).

All four Evangelists mention the death of Christ, and in the following words :—

St. Matthew says :† *And Jesus, again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

St. Mark :‡ *And Jesus, having cried with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.*

St. Luke :§ *And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said : Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And saying this, he gave up the ghost.*

St. John :|| *Jesus, therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said : It is consummated. And, bowing his head, he gave up the ghost.*

All these particulars may be considered.

*Jesus crying with a loud voice.*—This great voice came forth from the great affection of His prayer. He used the word *Father* now to show by His last Word that He was the Son of God, and to

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\* Ludolph, “Hours of the Passion” (Sext.)  
 † xxvii. 50.      ‡ xv. 37.      § xxiii. 46.      || xix. 30.

show with what confidence He gave His soul up to God. He cried with a loud voice, that all might hear and know that in His extreme agony He called God His Father, and how He entrusted Himself to Him. *Into thy hands*, that is, to Thy care, thus committing Himself to the safe keeping of the divine goodness, power and providence. *My spirit*, that is, my soul, which is now being separated from the body.

And, as St. John says, *bowing his head*. Up to this point He had head and heart erect ; but now dying, He bowed His head to signify His obedience and reverence towards His Father : *Tradidit spiritum*, He gave up the ghost ; that is, He freely and voluntarily died. *Bene tradidit*, says St. Ambrose, *qui non invitus amisit*. He freely gave up from whom it was not unwillingly taken.

After this short commentary, some few questions have to be answered to show the full meaning of this Word.

First—Why did our Saviour cry out with a loud voice, saying: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*?

St. Gregory of Nyssa says that, according to the Prophet,\* the heavenly Jerusalem is described as being *in the hands of the Father*. Christ here commended Himself into the hands of His Father, that it may be understood that immediately after He received all the happiness, the security and tranquillity of paradise ; for the hand of God extends to the just the protection and tranquillity of paradise.

St. Jerome, commenting on the 30th Psalm, verse 6th, *Into thy hands I commend my spirit*, says : “ That is, I commend to thy power my soul. The Church receives this example from Christ. This St. Stephen did ; this our Lord did on the cross when commending to His Father’s care His soul, which was so soon after to be reassumed or reunited to His body.” Hence, the faithful when dying say these words, by which they acknowledge and confess, first, that they have not received their\* souls from their

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\* Isaias, xlix.

parents, but from God, and therefore they render them up to Him. Secondly, they confess the immortality of the soul, and that it lives after death. Thirdly, they profess their belief in the resurrection of the body, and they commend their souls to God as a deposit to be kept safely until at the resurrection it be again restored to the body. Finally, this prayer is used as a protection against the demons, that in death God may protect and guard their souls. We must not conclude from this interpretation that Christ in any way prayed for the liberation of His own soul from the evil spirit, or against any future pain or loss ; for this could not be. His soul remained always and inseparably united to the Godhead, even when His body was dead and in the grave. The divine Word remained united hypostatically both to body and soul when separated from each other ; because the Incarnation was not dissolved by death.

Christ, in commending His spirit to His Father, meant thereby to commend to Him all men, and especially His own Blessed Mother. This is an interpretation given to His words by SS. Anselm and Athanasius. In that commendation He included our souls, whom He loved so much as to call them His spirit. The words of St. Athanasius are : “Cum in cruce dicit ; Pater in manus tuas depone spiritum, spiritum meum, in eo omnes homines apud Patrem deponit et commendat per ipsum ac in ipso vivificandos.”

It is not at all likely that Christ recited in an undertone the whole of the 30th Psalm, and that when He came to the verse, *In manus tuas, into thy hands*, that He said it aloud, and then expired. But we have to conclude from St. John, that His death was immediately after He had said, *It is consummated*, with no psalm intervening. He subjoined to this *consummatus est*, His last words : *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*. That one thing alone remainēd, namely, that He should commend His soul to His Father, and then die.

Secondly—What interpretation is given by commentators to the *loud voice* in which our Saviour uttered His last Word?

Cornelius à Lapide thinks that He had to use a special divine power to speak at that time with a loud voice ; that no man, after such tortures and loss of blood, could then naturally speak in a loud voice. It was, therefore, by a miracle that Christ was able to speak in a loud voice from the cross. St. Thomas, however, explains that He had, even in the midst of His bodily sufferings, reserved the power of His soul, so that at death He might be able to speak as He did ; but whichever view we take of the matter, we must regard it as miraculous, and it needed a special divine power to assist His human nature in His last agony. It was chiefly by this voice that the centurion was converted. No doubt, all the circumstances concurred to move him to repentance ; but St. Mark\* connects his profession of faith in the divinity of Christ, with this crying out with a loud voice : *And the centurion, who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said : Indeed this man was the Son of God.*

Thirdly—Why does He use the expression *spirit*, and not *soul* ; and why is it said, *emisit spiritum*—He gave up the ghost.

By His spirit He meant His soul, according to St. Augustine, and the common opinion of the Fathers and commentators.

Ven. Bede gives us a theological and abstruse reason for His using *spirit* instead of *soul*. “A spirit,” he says, “is a name given to a thing that is entirely incorporeal and independent of a body, according to the expression : *God is a spirit*. A soul has reference to a body. It is said, therefore, that He gave up the ghost, or spirit, because His soul, during the time it was separated from the body, was subsisting and independent of the body by reason of its union with the Word.”

Jesus bowed His head before giving up the ghost, not only as a

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\* xv. 39.



sign of obedience and reverence towards His Father, but also that He died freely, and not through any necessity. St. Ambrose says : *Quod enim emittitur voluntarium est, quod amittitur necessarium.* And this is according to our Saviour's own words : *I lay down my life, and no one taketh it away from me.* And, again : *Greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friends.*

As to the death itself of our blessed Redeemer, we must not forget to regard it as one of the actions by which He merited for us and redeemed us.

It is true that by all the actions of His life He merited our redemption. His preaching, His prayers, His Passion, and His death—all these had the conditions required for meriting, inasmuch as they, and all the actions of His life, were free and good. It therefore follows that, from the first moment of His conception to His last breath, when He ceased to be a *viator*, He never ceased to merit for us, according to those words of St. John : \* *And he that sent me is with me, and he hath not left me alone : for I do always the things that please him.*

And if the Church sings, *By thy resurrection, deliver us, O Lord*, it does not follow that Christ merited after death. We ask to be delivered through His resurrection, not by reason of merit, but by reason of it as a motive, or of efficacy given to it through Christ's previous merits. For Christ, before His death, merited that His resurrection, and the other works done by Him after death, should be salutary to those who believe and meditate upon them. In the same sense, the wound in that sacred side is said by the Fathers of the Church to be meritorious, although it was inflicted after death, inasmuch as Christ, whilst living, freely accepted it, and offered it to His Father as the price of our redemption.

But, although the least action of Christ was of infinite value, and sufficient to redeem the whole human race, yet Christ is said

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\* viii. 29.

specially to have redeemed us by His death, because He did not wish that His preceding works should have the effect of redemption unless in union with His subsequent passion and death, as the last complement of all His merits, according to the words of the Prophet Isaias : \* *And the Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity : if he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed.* †

In conclusion, let us remember that one drop of blood, one of Christ's least actions, a prayer or a tear, would have been sufficient to merit and satisfy for us, and to effect the work of redemption, had He so willed. But it was not sufficient to satisfy His love for our souls : *He loved us, and delivered himself for us.* It is in His Passion we find the strongest and most touching proofs of His love, in the choice of His death, in the greatness of His sorrows, and in His crucifixion. *Greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friends.*

Looking back on the history of His Passion and death, let us bear in mind that all these sufferings He bore for the sake of the very men who crucified Him, and who mocked Him in His agony, as well as for all mankind, no one being excluded from the fruits of His redemption. He suffered, not that He might gain any advantage for Himself, for He was God, but that He might pay our debts, contracted by sin, which we ourselves could never have paid. He suffered all, that He might wipe out the handwriting of sin against us, and that He might, by reconciling us to our heavenly Father, open to us His glory and His kingdom. The one motive which led Him to do all this, was His love for our souls. He loved us, and because He loved us He delivered Himself for us. Who can refuse to return that love ? *If any man, says the Apostle St. Paul, love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.*

Let us often listen to and reflect on His last seven dying words,

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\* liii. 10    † See Shouppe's "Elementa Dog. Theolog.," de Redemptore.

and carefully learn the lessons which they teach ; and let us be mindful also of those words of advice which He more than once gave during His lifetime : *Seek me whilst you can find me ; invoke me whilst I am near to you ; deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. He who does not carry his cross after me cannot be my disciple.*

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### WHAT HAPPENED AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND HIS BURIAL.

IMMEDIATELY ON the death of Christ, (Mt.) *behold the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top even to the bottom ; and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose. And, coming out of the tomb after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. (M.) And the centurion, who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he (Jesus) had given up the ghost. (Mt.) And they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying : Indeed this man was the Son of God.*

(L.) *And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned.*

(Mt.) *And there were there many women, afar off, (L.) and all his acquaintance, and the women who had followed him from Galilee. (M.) And many of the women who came up with him from Jerusalem.*

(J.) *Then the Jews (because it was the parascève), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that was a great Sabbath day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came,*

*and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. And after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water . . . For these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "You shall not break a bone." And, again, another Scripture saith: "They shall look on him whom they pierced." And after these things, (Mt.) when it was evening, there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. (L.) He was a counsellor, a good and just man. The same had not consented to their (the Jews') counsel and doings. (Mt.) He went to Pilate, and asked the body of Jesus. (M.) And Pilate wondered that he should be already dead. And, sending for the centurion, he asked him if he were already dead. And when he had understood it by the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. (J.) He came, therefore, and took away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came (he who at the first came to Jesus by night), bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. (M.) And Joseph buying fine linen and taking him down. (J.) They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*

*Now there was in the place where he was crucified a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man had yet been laid. There, therefore, because of the parascève of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand. (Mt.) And Joseph, taking the body . . . laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way.*

In this portion of the history of the Passion, we have to consider what happened immediately after the death of Christ. These events may be divided into the prodigies which were then manifested, causing the centurion, and those who were with him, to go down from the hill of Calvary striking their breasts, saying:

*Indeed this man was the Son of God*; and the treatment which the sacred body of Christ received after death, and its burial.

The sepulchre, or tomb, of our Lord was on Mount Calvary, north-west of Jerusalem, and was, as already observed, hewn out of a rock.\* It is now a kind of small chamber, the interior of which is almost square; its height from bottom to top is eight feet one inch; its length, six feet one inch; and its breadth, fifteen feet ten inches. The entrance, which looks towards the east, is but four feet high, and two feet four inches wide. The place where the body of our Saviour is said to have been laid, takes up one side of this cave. It is raised from the ground to the height of two feet four inches; its length is five feet eleven inches, and its breadth two feet eight inches, placed lengthwise from east to west, and is encrusted with white marble. The same arguments and proofs used for the location of Calvary apply also to the holy sepulchre.

In regard to the sacred body of Christ after death, we have the following points to consider:—

1. The legs of the thieves were broken, but not those of Christ.

2. His side was opened with a lance, or spear.

3. He was taken down from the cross.

4. Enclosed in a sepulchre, or tomb.

*The Breaking of the Legs.*—The breaking of their bones was the completion of their torture. On Calvary the legs of the two thieves were broken, but they abstained from mangling our Lord's sacred body, because they found Him already dead. To assure themselves of this, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance, from which there came forth blood and water.

This usage of breaking the legs of those crucified was observed amongst the Romans, and it was for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of the victims and hastening their death. The Jews

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\* St. John, xix. 41.

were more cruel in this instance than the Romans. They were not moved through any motive of humanity to lessen the torments of Christ; but that His body might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, they wished His death to be hastened.

*The Lance.*—This was a long and light weapon, used either as a spear or as an arrow. It was used by the Greek horse-soldiers and by huntsmen. It was fastened by a leathern girdle. We have not a good and incontestable representation of this weapon. The lance, which was used as a spear to pierce, and as an arrow to be thrown with the hand, had three distinct parts—the handle of bronze or iron; the wood of ash, or some such species of wood, and a sharp point of metal.

It is asked whether the soldier who pierced our Lord's side was a horse-soldier or on foot. The soldiers who crucified our Lord were four in number, and foot-soldiers. The Romans were wont to have the condemned guarded by foot-soldiers, armed with a lance. A short arm could easily reach the side of our crucified Redeemer on the cross.

Most authors say that it was the right side that was pierced or opened by the thrust of the lance. The more ancient pictures represent the place on the right side. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the chalice is placed on the right of the priest, to show that on that side the blood flowed from the cross. In the solemn function and Mass of the Sovereign Pontiff, the chalice is brought to the right of the Pontiff, and the Host on the left, for the purpose of showing this signification. For this opinion, Benedict XIV. is quoted.\*

Cornelius à Lapide also holds the opinion that it was the right side which was pierced, and this in verification of the words of the Prophet Ezechiel :† *And behold there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went out towards the East.* . . . St. Francis received the stigmata, and

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\* Lin. I., Ch. vii.    † Ezech. xlvii. 2.



was pierced in the right side, and in the hands and feet. Our Saviour's wound went across His whole body, from the right to the left side, so that the point of the lance appeared on the left side, having run through the body. SS. Bonaventure and Augustine tell us that the soldier's name was Longinus, who afterwards embraced Christianity, and was martyred in Cappadocia, where he preached the faith. Others think that Longinus was the centurion, and not the soldier who pierced His side. Others again say that Longin was the name of the lance, and that this word comes from a corruption of the Greek word, λόγχη.

*The taking down from the Cross.*—Joseph of Arimathea, aided probably by some others in taking Christ from the cross, could either have the cross and its victim laid down on the ground, and then the nails extracted from His hands and feet, or the cross standing erect, the body of Christ could be unfastened and let down into the arms that received it. It is probable that this latter mode was the one adopted, and it is that which is represented generally by painters; it would also be the most respectful manner that the disciples could make use of, as it was also the simplest and the quickest.

Nicodemus is spoken of together with Joseph of Arimathea. They, having taken down the body of Christ, carried it to a new sepulchre in the garden belonging to Joseph. All three places were near each other, and they are now enclosed by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

*The Burial of Christ and the Winding-sheet.*—The most ancient monument of burial on record is that given in the Book of Genesis,\* where Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father. And, while they were fulfilling his commands, there passed forty days: for this was the manner with bodies that were embalmed . . . Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old. And being embalmed, he was laid in a coffin in Egypt.

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\* Gen. l. 2, 3 & 25.

In the New Testament St. John gives the instance of Lazarus coming forth from the tomb :\* *And presently, he that was dead came forth; bound feet and hands with winding bands; and his face was bound about with a napkin.*

*The Burial of our Saviour.*—It is probable that a great number of cloths and bandages were employed in our Saviour's burial. The respectful prodigality indicated by the Gospel in the employment of aromatics shows that there would be no scarcity in the bandages and cloths to be used for them, and for embalming the sacred body, and all these would certainly be preserved afterwards as holy relics that had come in contact with our Saviour's body (hence the number of these relics).

St. John, who tells us that Christ was buried after the manner of the Jews, who enveloped the bodies of their dead in winding-sheets from head to foot, excludes the Roman custom, which was to burn the bodies and preserve their ashes in urns. The sacred body was wrapped up in myrrh and aloes, whose bitter sap had the property of preserving bodies from putrefaction, and whose weight was one hundred pounds, although four or five pounds would have been sufficient. This great quantity makes it appear that the body was not only covered, but bathed in perfumes, in order to hasten the operation, and to avoid the disrespect of touching the sacred body. Besides, these men were not accustomed to embalming; they were noblemen and of high degree. Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, a decurion, who had demanded from Pilate the body of Jesus; Nicodemus was a prince of the Jews, who had himself brought the aromatics. Although they now considered Him only as a prophet and a truly admirable man, they wished, nevertheless, says St. John Chrysostom, to testify their love and their faith with a profusion worthy of St. Mary Magdalen.

The winding-sheet used by Joseph to wrap round the body, in

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\* St. John, xi. 24.

order to carry it to the tomb, was distinct from those in which the body was embalmed. The body of our Lord remained in the sepulchre the whole of Saturday. The evening of that day, St. Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, brought aromatics and perfumes to aid in still further honouring the precious remains, or to continue the work of embalming, which generally lasted four days.

The sacred objects and winding bandages used in the burial of Christ were sent as relics to all parts of the world, but there are five which are more celebrated than the others, namely at Besançon, at Cadouin, Cahors, Compiègne, and Tours.\*

We now come to speak of the prodigies that happened at the death of Christ.

The first of these is the darkness. *Now there was darkness on the face of the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour.* Darkness in the physical sense is on three occasions specially mentioned in the Scriptures. The first is at the creation, when *darkness was upon the face of the deep*,† that is, chaos was immersed in thick darkness, because light was withheld from it. The second, that most terrible darkness that was brought on Egypt as a plague: "It was so thick," says Calmet,‡ "as to be, as it were, palpable; so horrible, that no one durst stir out of his place; and so lasting that it continued three days and three nights."§ Third, the darkness at our Saviour's death, which began at the sixth hour, or noon, and ended at the third hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. Thus it lasted almost the whole time He was on the cross. Some are of opinion that this darkness covered Judea only; which is sometimes expressed by *the whole earth*, that is, land or country; others that it extended over a hemisphere, or *the whole earth* literally. It should be remarked that the moon being at full, a natural eclipse of the sun was impossible; though Julius Africanus, Eusebius and

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\* See R. Fleury's "Instruments de la Passion." † Gen. i., 2.

‡ See Calmet's Bible Dictionary. § Exod. x. 21, 22; Wisdom, xvii. 2, 3.

St. Jerome, in their several chronicles, refer that eclipse of the sun, which Phlegon mentions, to our Saviour's death. That author says it was the greatest eclipse ever seen, since at noonday the stars were discernible in the heavens. It happened in the fourth year of the 102nd Olympiad, which is that of Jesus Christ's death. And Tertullian refers the heathen to their public archives for an account of this darkness.

As to how the darkness was produced, is a point on which no information has been given, and on which it is needless to speculate. The fact of its being at the time of full moon, and when consequently the moon could not come between the earth and the sun, puts the supposition of an eclipse out of the question. It is enough to say that the divine purpose required at the time a supernatural darkness in attestation of the appalling nature of the work which was in progress, so by some means or other a peculiar obscuration of the sun's rays was effected sufficient to strike awe into the minds of thoughtful observers.\*

Second—*The veil of the temple was rent in two.* This happened just as our Lord expired.

The temple was divided into three parts; the first was the *Atrium*; the second was called the *Sanctuary*; the third, which was the most holy of all, was called the *Holy of Holies*. The people had access to the first of these; the priests entered the second; and only the High-priest could enter the *Holy of Holies*, and then only once a year, on the feast of expiation. These parts were divided by two veils—one hanging before the Holy of Holies, and the other before the Sanctuary. It is not certain which of these veils it was that was rent at the death of Christ.

St. Jerome holds that it was the exterior veil, for which he assigns a mystical reason in these words: "*Quia nunc ex parte videmus et ex parte cognoscimus, cum autem venerit quod perfectum est,*

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\* Imperial Bible Dictionary.

*tunc et velum interius dirumpendum est, ut omnia, qua nunc nobis abscondita sunt domus Dei Sacramenta videamus."*

Baronius, Gothus and Lamy agree with this opinion. The last-named adds as a reason : " If it were the inner veil, then only the priests could have seen the miracle, and only at the time when entering the Sanctuary to light the lamps and offer incense."

On the contrary, St. Leo the Great and Cyril of Alexandria hold that it was the interior veil, which concealed the Holy of Holies, that was rent. This is now the more common opinion after à Lapide and Natalis Alexander, and Calmet, who observes that St. Paul \* seems to confirm this opinion, for he writes that Christ, the Chief High Priest, made manifest to us the way of the Sanctuary by a veil, that is, His body. The rending of the veil that was hung before the Holy of Holies, signifies that by His death Christ opened to us the way to heaven ; that, dispelling the shadows of the law, He, the true Pontiff, entered into the most interior precincts of the temple, that He might liberate all men from sin.

But, notwithstanding this, Suarez and some others still maintain that it is not quite certain which of the veils was rent.

By this rending of the veil our Lord wished to signify that the divine grace had receded from the temple, and that the place into which no one before could enter was now open to all.†

The third miracle, or rather series of miracles, at the death of Christ, was the earthquake, to which is added the breaking of the rocks and the opening of the graves.

*The Earthquake.*—This is a very remarkable one, which happened at the death of Christ. Many have thought that it was perceived throughout the world. Others think it was felt only in Judea or in the Temple of Jerusalem. St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, says that the rocks on Mount Calvary were shown in his time which had been rent asunder by the earthquake. Sandys and

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\* Ad. Heb. x. 5. † Benedict XIV., De Feria VI. in Parasceve.

Mandrell testify the same, and say that they examined the breaches in the rock, and were convinced that they were the effects of an earthquake. It must have been terrible, since the centurion and those with him were so affected by it as to acknowledge the innocence of our Saviour.\*

St. Thomas teaches that the rocks were broken to show that the stony hearts of men would be softened by the Passion of Christ, and that by virtue of the Passion the whole world would be changed for the better.

As to the resurrection of the dead, I need only note here that some have thought that immediately on the death of Christ, when the graves were opened, the dead arose and went down with Christ to Limbo, or that they were detained somewhere outside of Jerusalem till the resurrection of Christ, when they entered and appeared to many in the streets of Jerusalem. But the more common opinion, as given by Suarez, is that at the time of the earthquake the tombs were opened, but the saints did not arise except together with Christ.

In concluding this portion of the Gospel history, we have to indicate the year, the day, and the hour in which our Saviour died.

According to the old and commonly received tradition, Christ died on the 25th of March. This is asserted on the express testimony of Tertullian, SS. Chrysostom and Augustine.

*The Hour of His Death.*—This was at three o'clock in the afternoon. On this point there is a Scriptural difficulty to be cleared up. St. Mark says it was at the *third hour* He was crucified,† and St. John at *the sixth*‡. To reconcile these two Evangelists we have the following interpretation given in St. Thomas: “At the third hour Jesus was crucified by the voice of the Jews, and at the sixth He was nailed to the cross.” Baronius and Maldonatus give the interpretation as follows:—“The Jews, as i;

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\* Calmet, Bible Dictionary. † St. Mark, xxv. 25. ‡ St. John, xix. 14.



well known, divided the day into four parts. The first called *prime*, because it was the beginning of the day, and it embraced the three first hours. The second, which lasted from prime to mid-day, was *sext*, because it finished at the sixth hour of the day. For a similar reason the next part was called *none*, as it finished at the ninth hour. From this hour till sunset was called *vespers*, or evening. When, therefore, St. Mark writes that Christ was crucified at the third hour, he does not mean at the beginning of that part of the day, but at its close, and at the beginning of *sext*. And in the same way St. John means that Christ was crucified at the beginning of the part of the day called *sext*. Thus both the Evangelists mean precisely the same hour of the day when speaking of the crucifixion.

Now as to the year of Christ's death, and the age of our Lord, there is some dispute amongst commentators. Graveson shows that our Saviour died at the beginning of or after entering His thirty-third year, and in the nineteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius. Calmet says that it was in the middle of His thirty-sixth year; Natalis Alexander that it was on entering His thirty-seventh year, and in the nineteenth of the Emperor Tiberius. Honoratus à S. Maria (an author quoted by Benedict XIV.) says that it was in His thirtieth year, and in the fifteenth year of Tiberius. But Benedict XIV. holds that which may be called the common opinion, and that which has at least the tacit approbation of the Church, that Christ died in His thirty-third year, either at its beginning or its close, or, as Baronius suggests, with the addition of three months. This was in the eighteenth or nineteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius. There does not seem any sufficient reason to deviate from this commonly received opinion.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

\* (L.) *And it was the day of the Parasceve, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women that were come with him from Galilee, following after, saw the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And, returning, they prepared spices and ointments, and on the Sabbath day they rested, according to the commandment. (Mt.) And the next day which followed the day of preparation, the Chief-priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead, and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate saith to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they, departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting guards.*

(Mt.) *And in the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, (M.) Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus.*

*And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, (J.) when it was yet dark, (M.) they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen, (L.) bringing the spices which they had prepared with them.*

(Mt.) *And they said, one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?*

(Mt.) *And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.*

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\* In this part of the Gospel narrative I have followed the harmony as given by Lamy.

*And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And, for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men.*

*(M.) And looking, they saw (L.) the stone rolled back from the sepulchre. (M.) For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, (L.) they found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

*And it came to pass, as they were astonished in their minds at this, behold two men stood by them in shining apparel. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their countenances towards the ground, they said unto them :*

*Fear not you, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. (L.) Why seek you the living with the dead. (Mt.) He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. (L.) Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying : The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (Mt.) Come and see the place where the Lord was laid. And going quickly, (M.M.) tell his disciples (M.) and Peter (Mt.) that he is risen, (M.M.) and behold he will go before you into Galilee ; there you shall see him, (M.) as he told you. Lo, I have foretold it to you.*

*(L.) And they remembered his words.*

*(M.M.) And they went out quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and with great joy, running to tell his disciples.*

*(M.) And they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid.*

*(L.) And they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. And it was Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and Mary of James, and the other women who were with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them.*

*(J.) Mary Magdalen ran, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them : They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

*Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying. And the napkin that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapped up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.*

*The disciples therefore departed again to their home.*

*(L.) And (Peter) went away, wondering in himself at that which had come to pass.*

*The Body of Christ in the Tomb.*—St. Thomas teaches that the body of Christ should not be subject to putrefaction. For, although if you take the condition of suffering nature which His was, notwithstanding the hypostatic union, His body could putrefy, in case no miracle intervened to prevent this. It could not putrefy if you take into account that which is assigned as the cause of man's corruption, namely, sin. For this reason there was, by the divine power, given to the body of Christ the gift of immunity from corruption. It was not to fall under the curse pronounced in Genesis : *Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.\** And in Him we find fulfilled that prophecy of David's : *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.†*

*The Descent of the Soul of Christ into Hell, or Limbo.*—This descent of the soul of Christ to hell is referred to in the text of the Psalms just quoted, where holy David speaks in the person of our Lord, and in other places wherein the Royal Prophet speaks in the same sense of the descent of His soul, and its liberation out of it.

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\* Gen. iii. 19.      † Psalms, xv. 10.

To this also the Prophet Zacharias\* refers, when he says : *Thou also by the blood of thy testament hast sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water ; and Ecclesiasticus† : I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth, and will behold all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord.*

We may also add the text of the Epistle of St. Peter:‡ *Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might offer us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit. In which, also coming, he preached to those spirits that were in prison, which had been sometime incredulous when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe.*

These words clearly signify that Christ descended into hell after His death. The same truth is expressed in the Apostles' Creed, and in the Creed of St. Athanasius, and it therefore belongs to the Christian faith.

Therefore, the body of Christ was placed in the sepulchre, and His soul went down to Limbo, but both to body and soul, even though separated from each other, the divine Person remained hypostatically united. One reason amongst others assigned by St. Thomas for this is, that what God confers by grace or favour is not revoked except on account of sin, which could not be imputed to or found in Christ. It may also be stated in this place, that during the time of Christ's death the blood of Christ remained hypostatically united to the Word. After it was defined by the Council of Trent that in the Holy Eucharist the body is under the species of bread, and the blood under the species of wine, and the soul under both species, by reason of the natural connection or concomitance by which all the parts of our risen Lord are united, we must hold that the blood was a true and real part of Christ, and, therefore, united to the Word, and it would be erroneous now to deny this.

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\* Zach. ix 11.    † Eccles. xxiv. 45.    ‡ Epis. St. Peter, iii. 18, et seq.

In speaking of the resurrection of Christ, Benedict XIV. treats the following five questions :—

1. The truth of the resurrection.
2. The time and hour at which Christ rose from the dead.
3. The circumstances of the resurrection.
4. The quality or condition of His body after the resurrection.
5. Those that rose from the dead together with Christ.

As to the first of these, St. Thomas proves by five reasons that Christ should rise again from the dead :—1. For the commendation of the divine justice, which required that He who humbled Himself to the death of the cross, should be exalted by a glorious resurrection. 2. For the instruction of our faith, that through the resurrection of Christ our faith in His divinity might be confirmed. 3. For the solace of our hope, because when we certainly know Christ living again, we hope that we also shall rise again. 4. For the formation of the life of the faithful ; for as Christ risen from the dead dies now no more, so we, being dead to sin, may live to God. 5. For the complement or completion of our salvation ; He returned to life, that through the preaching of the Apostles He might make us participators (*compotes*) of the fruits of His Passion.

There are many prophecies of the Old Testament which foretell the resurrection of Christ, as may be seen in the Psalter.\* And in the New Testament Christ Himself predicted His resurrection.† Then after the event happened, the resurrection was freely and clearly asserted by the Apostles and by St. Paul.‡

It is incredible that the Apostles would dare to proclaim publicly the resurrection of Christ if this had not really taken place, and in the face of witnesses that could at once convict them of falsehood, if this were possible. It is also incredible that they would sacrifice their lives for what they knew to be a lie, or for a

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\* Psalms, xl. 11, lxx. 20, cxiv. 2, 3, usque ad 8.

† St. Matt. xvi. 21. St. John, ii. 19.

‡ Acts, iii. 15, iv. 33, x. 40, 41, and xiii. 30, 31. 1st. Cor. xv. 4, usque ad 9.



fact that was not sufficiently established. Moreover, who could believe that those simple, unlettered and uneducated men who, a little before were so terrified as to take refuge in flight, would steal the body of our Lord? They would have to take away the heavy stone from the door of the sepulchre, and unloosen all the bandages and winding-sheets in which the sacred body was enveloped, and do all this in the presence of the guards set to watch the tomb, and all this in order that the report of the resurrection of Christ might be obtruded on the whole world, and that all generations might be thereby deceived.

The Jews endeavoured to attribute to them this more than human fortitude ; and they suborned the soldiers, by giving them money, to say that when they were asleep the disciples came and took away secretly the body of Christ.\*

Secondly, in regard to the day and hour of the resurrection. It was on the first day of the week, which we call Sunday, and which is called by St. Matthew† the end of the Sabbath. The name of Sabbath in the Scriptures is used to signify the whole week ; thus in the parable, the Pharisee says that he fasts *bis in Sabbatho*, that is, twice in the week.‡ This day the Jews called *unam Sabbathi*, the first after the Sabbath ; but Christians, on account of the resurrection, call it Sunday, or the Lord's Day.

As to the hour, authors are not agreed, and the Scripture is silent on the point ; from which St. Jerome concludes that the hour is not known. Some have thought that Christ rose from the dead just as the night of Saturday was passing away ; others, that it was a little after midnight ; and some others, that it was at the dawn of the aurora on Sunday morning. This opinion is the one commonly received with St. Thomas, who says that it was then Christ rose from the dead to signify that by His resurrection He would bring us to the light of glory, just as He died towards the shades of night, to show that by His death he would dissipate the

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\* St. Matt. xxvii. 64.    † St. Matt. xxviii. 1.    ‡ St. Luke, xviii. 12.

darkness of sin and penalty. This would seem to be the opinion of the Church, as appears from the Paschal hymn of Lauds. Hence the holy women who had come to the sepulchre immediately at sunrise, did not find the body of Christ, which had already been brought back to life, as is narrated by SS. Mark and Luke. We may, therefore, conclude that Christ rose from the dead only a little before the angel descended and opened the tomb, and the earth was shaken; for these things happened whilst the holy women were coming to the tomb.

Thirdly, the circumstances attending the resurrection have to be considered.

In treating of these I shall endeavour to follow throughout the arrangement given by Benedict XIV.\*

We shall first give what the Evangelists narrate.

St. Matthew mentions the earthquake, the angel coming down from heaven in white raiment, and his countenance as lightning, and that he rolled back the stone and sat upon it.† He then told the women that Christ had risen, and he ordered them to see the place where the Lord was laid, and to go tell His disciples that He was risen, and he told them also that they would see Him in Galilee, whither He had gone before them. The women went forth quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and ran to tell the disciples.

St. Mark tells us‡ that the women saw the stone rolled back, and, entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man (an angel) sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe. He exhorted them not to be afraid; that Christ had risen; that they might behold the place. He ordered them to go tell the disciples, especially Peter. But they, going out from the sepulchre, and trembling with fear, said nothing to any man.

St. Luke tells us§ that the women found the stone rolled back

\* De Sabbatho Sancto.

† St Mark, xvi. 4, et seq.

† St. Matt. xxviii. 2, et seq.

§ St. Luke, xxiv. 2, et seq.

from the tomb, and that two men stood by them in shining apparel, who told them that Christ was risen, as He had predicted. And they, going back from the sepulchre, told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

St. John testifies\* that Mary Magdalen, seeing the stone taken away from the sepulchre, ran back to Peter and John, and told them that they had taken away the body of Christ, and she knew not where they had laid Him. These two disciples ran to the sepulchre, and St. John outran St. Peter, and, coming first to the sepulchre, saw the linen cloths lying; but yet he went not in. St. Peter entered the sepulchre, and he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about His head not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place. St. John then entered the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. In the meantime the Magdalen stood at the sepulchre weeping, and, looking into the sepulchre, she saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus was laid, and being asked by them why she wept, she answered: *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* When she had said this she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing in the form of a gardener, and at length she knew Him, and told the disciples afterwards: *I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me.*

Before reconciling the different narratives of the Evangelists, we have to notice: 1. That the earthquake happened before the women arrived at the sepulchre, and at the time that the angel descended from heaven. This is founded on the text of St. Matthew: *And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.*† From which it appears that Christ had risen before the angel rolled back the stone, otherwise the Evangelist would have connected the earthquake not with the descending of the angel, but with the resurrection of Christ.

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\* St. John, xx. 2, et seq. † St. Matt. xxviii. 2.

Some of the Fathers thought that the angel opened the sepulchre that there might be free egress for Christ's body, not that this was necessary, but it might have been done through a kind of honour, or out of respect. The more common opinion of the Fathers, and the one generally received, is that it was opened by His order, that the holy women and the disciples might have access to it, and see where His body was laid, and that no occasion of doubt as to the reality of His resurrection might be given. As Christ came forth from the womb of Mary, so He came forth from the sepulchre, without even the seal of the rock being broken.

Now to reconcile the narratives. SS. Matthew and Mark mentioned only one angel as seen by the women, and that was the angel who terrified the guards, and rolled back the stone and sat upon it. SS. Luke and John mention two angels as seen by the women. The first two Evangelists make mention of that angel only who took a principal part in this event, and who spoke to the women. St. Luke mentions that two angels appeared, thus giving the exact number. And though he represents both angels as speaking, this need not be at variance with the account as given by SS. Matthew and Mark; for, according to Scriptural usage, what is done by one or other of them, in the name of both, would be attributed to the two.

Neither does St. John differ from St. Matthew and St. Mark, when he narrates another apparition of the angels to St. Mary Magdalen after they had been seen by the other women. Nor does St. Mark, who says that the women said nothing to anyone, differ from St. Luke, who says that they told the eleven and all the rest, because St. Mark is to be understood of the silence of the women on their way back, but not after they came to the disciples, who were assembled together filled with grief and mourning.

There appears to be a greater difficulty in reconciling an apparent discrepancy between St. Matthew and St. John. St. Matthew

narrates that Mary Magdalen and the other women entered the tomb, and found the stone rolled back. St. John writes that Mary Magdalen, seeing the stone rolled back, ran back to Peter, and said to him: *They have taken away the Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*; and she does not say that she either saw or heard an angel. Benedict XIV. gives the following explanation of this difficulty. According to his arrangement, the Magdalen and the other women came and entered the tomb, and saw no one there. The angel who had rolled back the stone had not yet manifested himself, so that the Magdalen saw nothing but the cloths and winding-sheet, and she ran quickly and found Peter and John, and spoke to them, as already mentioned. They ran to the sepulchre, and saw nothing more than the Magdalen told them, namely, the empty grave and the cloths, &c. The women remained at the tomb, but Magdalen went round the garden in her great desire to find the body. In the meantime the other women saw the two angels, who told them of the resurrection of Christ, and commanded them to go and tell the Apostles. Then Mary Magdalen, after she had sought in vain for the body, returned to the sepulchre, and saw our Lord in the form of a gardener, and also the two angels, whom she thought were men.

This explanation removes all discrepancy in the different narratives, but it is only one way of reconciling matters. There are other ways just as reasonable and probable. We may well suppose that on that occasion there were many angels about, and many apparitions, and the holy women were going to and fro at various points and times. One Evangelist mentions one series of incidents, and another another, and no one of them included all the incidents in his own account, and for this reason no discrepancy can be concluded or argued from their narratives. That was a day when heaven and earth were moved, and no doubt all that is narrated happened, and far more that is not narrated. If I have gone into the question minutely, it is for the purpose of

dwelling the longer on the circumstances of our Lord's resurrection. The more one meditates and dwells upon these mysteries, the more is his soul influenced by them, and, therefore, minute investigations of the incidents in connection with them need not be considered useless speculation. It is necessary at times in order to refute the objections of infidels, and it is always useful.

The fourth question to be investigated is the quality of Christ's body after the resurrection.

1. It was a true and solid body, not a phantom, otherwise it could not be said that Christ truly rose from the dead, as for this it was necessary that His own body and soul should be again united. It does not signify that He appeared and disappeared through closed doors, for it belongs to a glorified body to appear or withdraw itself from sight, as the person may wish, and to penetrate other bodies. 2. His body was entire as regards flesh, bones and blood. 3. It was glorious, as His resurrection was the example of our resurrection, as well as the cause, and the bodies of the saints will be glorious in their resurrection. 4. It retained the five wounds, according to the testimony of St. John. This Christ did for His own glory, in order to establish belief in His resurrection, and that He might intercede for us with the Father by those wounds through which He expiated our sins.

It is true that in some places, especially at Mantua, drops of the precious blood are retained, and its stains are on the Scala Sancta ; but this does not at all interfere with what has been said about Christ's body being entire after His resurrection, because all of the precious blood was not necessary to the integrity of His body, and therefore not necessarily resumed in the resurrection. The divine Word remained hypostatically united to the portions of the blood which belonged to the integrity of His body ; but it did not always remain united to the other portions that were not necessary for the integrity of His body, and He did not, therefore, assume them in His resurrection.



The fifth and last question to be considered in connection with this mystery, concerns those who rose from the dead on this occasion, according to the testimony of St. Matthew.\* *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose. And, coming out of the tomb after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many.*

The common opinion, following Suarez, is that the graves were opened at the time of Christ's death, but that the dead did not arise until His resurrection.

Concerning these resuscitated dead, two questions are asked :  
1. Who were they? 2. Did they return to their graves again, or go with our Saviour up to heaven at His ascension?

As to the first of these questions, some have thought that they were those souls who had been the longest detained in the bosom of Abraham, such as Adam, Abel, Noe, Abraham, Moses, and many others of the Old Law, up to David. But as the graves were not opened everywhere, but in Jerusalem and near it, it is supposed that those only came to life whose graves were opened; and, as it is not easy to suppose that all the ancient Fathers up to Abraham were buried in Palestine, this opinion is not very well sustained. Others, on the contrary, have thought that they were those who were actually known to the Jews, that had come to life again, such as Zachary, with his son, St. John Baptist, the aged Simeon, and the good thief. Others, again, contend that it was those who prophesied concerning Christ, or who were types of Him, that arose, such as Moses, David, Samuel, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel and Melchisedech, who was an image of the priesthood of Christ; and Job, Jonas, and the three children who were preserved in the fiery furnace, who were types of Christ's resurrection. So that there is nothing decided on this point except what the sacred text says, *that many of the bodies of the dead arose.*

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\* St. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

As to the other question, whether they returned to the grave again, or were taken up to heaven, authors are not agreed, and the Scripture is silent on the point: à Lapide and Maldonatus agree with the opinion that they did not again return to the grave—that their bodies were glorious, from the fact that they appeared to some and not to all, and not like Lazarus, who, after his resurrection, was seen by all.

The other opinion is thought to be the more probable by St. Thomas and Calmet, according to what St. Paul says of the just of the Old Law: \* *And all these being approved by the testimony of faith, received not the promise, God providing some better things for us, that they should not be perfected without us.* Which is understood of the perfect resurrection to an immortal life, which God would not give them before us.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SEVEN DOLOURS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

THIS history of our Lord's sacred Passion would not be complete without giving some account of the Dolours of our Blessed Lady in connection with it. It is not possible to think of Jesus suffering, without at the same time considering the sorrows of Mary, His Mother—those sorrows of which His sufferings were the cause.

The sorrows of Mary are known by the name of her dolours. As we are aware, Mary's life was one of suffering. She was the most perfect imitator of her divine Son, and every imitator of Christ must take up his cross and follow Him. In her life-long suffering some stages or events were especially sorrowful, and were

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\* Ad Heb. xi. 39, 40.

to her the occasion of bitter grief. These were at the particular periods of her life when her divine Son was subjected to some new and particular kind of suffering.

The Church has selected seven of those sorrowful events for our special devotion, and they are commonly known as the seven dolours of the Blessed Virgin. They may be here enumerated :—

1. The prophecy through Simeon.
2. The flight into Egypt.
3. The three days' loss.
4. The meeting of Jesus carrying His cross.
5. The crucifixion.
6. The taking down from the cross.
7. The burial of Jesus.

These seven dolours are mysterious samples of her many other sorrows, and, as Fr. Faber says, they may be regarded as types of all human sorrow whatsoever.

I shall now consider these dolours one by one, observing in my treatment of them the same method which I have followed in explaining the events of the Passion. The Gospel narrative of the first three dolours will be given with notes and comments on its literal and moral signification. The account of the fourth dolour we have handed down to us by tradition, and may be placed under the Gospel narrative of the Way of the Cross. The remaining three dolours are contained in the Gospel narrative of the History of the Passion, as given already in the course of this work. In their investigation, it will only be necessary to consider those events in their relation to our Blessed Lady, and the sorrow endured by her at the crucifixion, death, and burial of Christ.

It is not my intention to attempt to describe Mary's sorrow in each dolour, nor the dispositions with which she received it ; but my efforts in this chapter, as in the preceding ones, will be confined to explaining the events in so far as they supply the subject matter of meditation, leaving the inferences, the reflections and

affections of each individual soul to its own pious thoughts and sentiments.

### THE FIRST DOLOUR.

*The Prophecy of Simeon.*—This event is narrated in the Gospel of St. Luke (ii. 33, et seq.) : *And his father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, his mother : Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.*

This prophecy was made on the occasion of the ceremony of the purification of the Blessed Virgin, and the presentation of her divine Son in the temple. This was forty days after the birth of Christ, when Mary and Joseph went up from Bethlehem to Jerusalem with the Infant Jesus, that He might be presented in the temple, according to the law of Moses, which required every first-born male child to be offered to the Lord in the temple.

Holy Simeon took the Child Jesus in his arms, and expressed his great joy and happiness at seeing the Author of salvation in his beautiful words of praise and thanksgiving : *Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples : A light to the revelation of the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel* (St. Luke, ii. 29, et seq.).

Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph wondered at these remarkable words spoken by the aged Simeon. He blessed them, not the Child Jesus, but Mary, His mother, and His foster-father, St. Joseph. And then he uttered the wonderful prophecy : *Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel.*

Cornelius à Lapide, commenting on these words, thus explains them :—“Christ is placed in the Christian Church as a foundation

or corner-stone, that all who believe may be said to be built upon Him, and in this way the spiritual edifice of the Church is erected. It was He (that Child) who of old was promised to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and to the other patriarchs and prophets. God did this, with the direct purpose that all the Jews might be attracted to Christ, and thus be fitted into the Church and obtain their salvation. He foresaw, however, that many of them would contradict Him by their vices and sins; that they would act against Him as though beating against a stone rock of offence, and be broken to pieces, and thus fall, and be ruined for time and eternity. But on no account was the decree of God, in reference to the work of redemption, to be changed. All was to be carried out as divinely appointed. Christ became incarnate, and was placed in the position already decreed. God permitted the rebellion and contradiction of the Jews against Him. For which reason, St. Paul and the other Apostles of Christianity transferred the Gospel from the ungrateful and rebellious Jews to the gentiles, so that instead of the Jews, all the nations of the earth were to believe in Christ. These were built into the Church and brought into the way of salvation after the manner taught by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (Ch. ii.). This was the design of God, by which Christ was placed as the corner-stone of the Church, and He would thus be indirectly to the fall, but directly to the resurrection of many in Israel.

He was placed, therefore, to the ruin of many; not in the sense that Christ came in order that many should offend and fall through Him, but that many, through their own fault, would refuse to believe in Him, and thereby bring about their own ruin. This would be the consequence of their own sin, not the effect of His coming.

*He is set for the resurrection of many.* As many as will receive Him by faith, to them will He give the power of becoming the children of God, and of coming into the inheritance of the children of God.

Thus, Christ is not placed for the resurrection in the same way as for the ruin. The cause of the fall or ruin of many is the sin of the incredulous—the sin of those who receive not Christ, but take occasion even from His goodness to bring about their own destruction. On the other hand, Christ is the real cause of the resurrection of mankind, and the reparation of the human race. He is the real cause of their sanctification, not indeed the necessary cause, as if compelling men to believe, but the efficacious cause, enabling them to do so, and preserving intact the free-will of those who come to Him and arise by faith. Those, therefore, who believed in Him arose, but those who refused to do so fell, and thus the Child was set for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel.

Holy Simeon also predicted that Christ would be *set as a sign which shall be contradicted*. Here Christ is compared to a sign or standard that is set up, to which there will be opposition, and against which the enemies of God will direct their aim. Christ raised His standard when, by His preaching and doctrine, He called the Jews to the Gospel faith, and when He sent His Apostles to announce His advent to the world. But the Jews rose up against Jesus preaching this new doctrine of salvation, and directed all their forces against Him, until they delivered Him up to death.

And after having foretold this, the holy old man then subjoins the prediction of Mary's sorrows by the words : *And thy own soul a sword shall pierce*. The meaning of this part of the prophecy is clearly understood from the preceding. It is as if he said : "The contradictions to this Child will go so far, that He will be nailed to a cross, on which He will expire ; His side will be opened with a lance, and when thou shalt see Him thus transfixed, the sword of sorrow will pierce thy own soul. That sword and those nails which will wound His body, will pierce thy own soul with unspeakable sorrow and anguish." The sword



here referred to may also mean the cross itself on which Christ died. This will penetrate the soul of Mary, inasmuch as it will cause the death of her beloved and only-begotten Son.

Holy Simeon adds to all this the words : *that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed*. As if he said : " This sword which will pierce your soul, will be the occasion of revealing the thoughts of many, which up to that time will remain secret and concealed." This, in reality, happened ; for, a long time before Christ's Passion, the Chief-priests and many of the Jews had been thinking over in their minds the plan of putting Him to death, but they dared not attempt it for fear of the people. But during the time of His Passion, all these thoughts were made manifest to the world.

Suarez, in treating on this subject, notices that the words of holy Simeon were not spoken for the purpose of instructing the Blessed Virgin, but for the sake of others, and for the Church. The Blessed Virgin was well versed in the knowledge of the Scriptures and the ancient prophecies about the work of redemption. If there were question of the substance of the mysteries of faith, there was nothing which she could learn concerning them from any mere human being, inasmuch as she was singularly enlightened by the Holy Ghost in a manner superior to all other human beings ; but if there were question of some of the circumstances in connection with these mysteries, or of understanding some particular passage of Scripture and such like, and of individual things, the knowledge of which is principally obtained by experience, there can be no error or inconvenience in admitting that the Blessed Virgin could learn these things from others. Because we need not hold that she had all at once, and from the beginning, an exact knowledge of all these things.\* As, for example, she did not know, before the Annunciation, the woman of whom Christ would be born, nor the time and place of the Incarnation.

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\* Suarez, D. 19, S. 2.

Simeon, therefore, did not tell her anything of which she was ignorant; but he brought before her mind what she had often heard, and what she had already well understood. He addressed himself individually to the Blessed Virgin, because these mysteries specially concerned her, and what he now reveals would in a special manner affect her sorrowful and loving heart.

We may learn from this dolour, and the prophecy of Simeon, to reflect on how Christ at the present time is contradicted in the same way as in former times. Humility is contradicted; poverty and obedience are contradicted; so are sufferings, trials, and the crosses sent us by an all-wise Providence. If we do not contradict Christ by incredulity of mind, we do so by want of probity and rectitude in our conduct. Christ followed poverty; we desire riches. He sought labour; we seek comfort. He embraced suffering and endured injuries; we only wish for honours and pleasures.

Thus it is that Christ is contradicted. Mary suffered because of His sufferings, and because of the cruelty and contradictions of men against Him and against His teaching. Let us remember that she endured this first dolour for His sake, and also for our sakes. Her sufferings were offered for us in union with those of her divine Son. Our contradictions to Him caused them. For this reason, let us pray to her through this dolour, that our hearts may be moved to true sorrow for our sins, and that, through her intercession, Christ may not be set *for our ruin, but for our resurrection.*

#### THE SECOND DOLOUR.

*The Flight into Egypt.*—This event is narrated by St. Matthew (ii. 13, et seq.).

*And after they (the wise men) were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall*

*tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him. Who arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod. That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called my Son.*

After this follows the narrative of the slaughter of the Innocents, by the command of King Herod, when that was fulfilled which was predicted by the Prophet Jeremias: *A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not* (St. Matt. ii. 18).

All this happened soon after the departure of the magi, or wise men. Whether it was only a few days after, or two or three months, is uncertain. In connection with this dolour, we have to consider the apparition of the angel to St. Joseph, the journey and sojourn in Egypt, the slaughter of the Innocents, and the return from Egypt.

*The Apparition of the Angel to St. Joseph.*—The angel of the Lord appeared in the city of Nazareth to Joseph when he was asleep. It does not appear that the angel was seen in corporeal form, or that Joseph heard him speak in words; but he was seen and heard in a dream, or vision; that is, the angel made Joseph understand that he was present with him by impressing it upon his imagination, and by representing himself to his mind as speaking to him.

The angel tells him to *arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt.* Thus he will be outside the jurisdiction of Herod. Also, by the mysterious design of God, Christ's presence in Egypt will prepare that country, so much addicted to idolatry, and the representative of all gentile nations, for the introduction of the true religion of the Gospel, which it will afterwards receive.

The angel added some words of consolation, by telling Joseph

that this exile was only to be till the death of Herod. So that he might understand his banishment was to be only for a time, and that during that time the Holy Family would be under the special protection of God. The angel goes on to say : *For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him.* Herod intended to have Him killed even in the arms of His Mother. It would not have been difficult for God to destroy Herod, or, by some other simple means, to frustrate his efforts so that the flight into Egypt need not have taken place. But Christ wished to avoid the danger by flight, to teach us the reality of His assumed nature, and that the divine dispensation might be carried out by which He was to give Himself up to suffering, and not to resist it by His omnipotent power ; and also He wished to give an example and authority to the just for taking refuge in flight, whenever the glory of God or the salvation of souls may require it.

It may be asked, in what did the danger consist? Herod did not order all the children of his kingdom to be killed, but only those in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood, and the Holy Family at the time was at Nazareth. What, therefore, was the necessity of their flight into Egypt? This difficulty is easily answered by the fact that Herod was king over both provinces, and, therefore, Nazareth and Bethlehem were under his jurisdiction. He was certainly intent on the death of the Child, as appears from the words of the angel announcing the death of Herod : *For they are dead that sought the life of the child* (St. Matt. ii. 80). How easily might he not discover that a woman, a stranger, had brought forth a son at Bethlehem, and soon after left there and returned to Nazareth. The danger was imminent in any part of Herod's kingdom, and hence the necessity of going into another country.

*The Journey into Egypt and the Sojourn there.*—Joseph, thus admonished, arises and takes the Child and His Mother by night ; the very same night in which he received the vision. St. Francis de Sales, speaking of the virtues of St. Joseph, thus refers to his

flight into Egypt :—"The angel commands him to set out quickly, and to take our Lady and her most dear Son into Egypt. And behold he sets out at once without saying a word. He does not inquire, 'Where shall I go? What road shall I take? How shall we find food? Who will receive us?' He sets out probably with his tools on his back, in order to gain, in the sweat of his brow, his poor bread and that of his family."\*

God sent His Son to the Egyptians, on whom He had formerly inflicted so many punishments, as a pledge to them of future reconciliation.

Many authors, in speaking of this journey, refer to the overturning and breaking of the idols as Christ entered the country. Other facts and miracles are also narrated as having happened on this occasion, as that the Holy Family were entertained by robbers, and that the son of one of these robbers turned out to be the good thief who died penitent on the cross. These incidents are uncertain, and on that account I need not enlarge on them, or give them more than this simple reference. The same has to be said of the length of time spent in Egypt. Some say seven years, some five, some two, and some even limit the stay to a few months, and as there are so many different opinions on the point, it is clear that nothing certain can be stated concerning the matter. St. Francis de Sales further says of St. Joseph: "The angel did not tell him what time he was to remain in Egypt, and he did not inquire; he dwelt there (according to this holy doctor) five years, without inquiring about his return, being sure that He who had commanded him to go, would again command him when he had to return. . . . He was in a land, not only of strangers, but of enemies of the Israelites, inasmuch as the Egyptians still resented their departure, and their having been the cause of a great number of the Egyptians being drowned in pursuit of them."

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\* Conference xix.

We may imagine how Mary suffered during these event—how she longed to return. Her continual fear amongst the Egyptians, the anxiety at going away, during the journey and during the abode in Egypt—how it must have tormented and afflicted her loving heart.

*The Slaughter of the Innocents.*—Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Herod did not advert to the deception all at once, or immediately after the departure of the wise men. But, after the Purification, and when the rumours about the Messias were again spread abroad, and especially when the things that happened in Jerusalem at the time of the Purification began to be reported, Herod then adverted to the fact. Up to that time he probably thought that the wise men themselves had been deceived, and that not having found the Messias, they were ashamed to return to him. He now became angry, and his pretended piety was turned into cruelty. Wherefore, sending his soldiers, they killed all the men-children in Bethlehem and the surrounding district, from *two years old and under*; that is, those born up to the time of the arrival of the magi and the two years before that, but not the infants born in the interval of the thirty or forty days since the arrival of the magi, for the star indicated the Messias as already born, and not to be born.

Herod went back two years as a measure of precaution, so that the Infant Jesus could not escape. He supposed that He might have been born some time before the apparition of the star, and be somewhat older than what the wise men represented. For the same reason he extended his cruelty to the country surrounding Bethlehem.

This slaughter of the Innocents had the effect of making the



nativity of Christ more celebrated and better known throughout Judea. It also rendered the glory of Christ more illustrious. Whilst the impious enemy of God did not hesitate to put to death so many innocent children that he might secure the death of one, namely, the Child Jesus, God has shown that no amount of human astuteness or cruelty can injure him who is under the divine protection, and has taught us the lesson that in future ages His children would be subjected to many persecutions at the hands of cruel tyrants, and that all their efforts would be vain and powerless to effect the extirpation of the Gospel and the faith of Christ.

Whilst in Egypt, Mary heard of this terrible martyrdom of innocent children in and around Bethlehem. She heard of the cries and weeping of their afflicted mothers; the sorrow of that country, as represented by Rachel weeping over her children, that is, the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, some of whom were taken prisoners and others killed, so that none of them were to be found living. *Vox in Rama audita est. A voice in Rama was heard, lamentations and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*

*The Return of the Holy Family.*—St. Matthew describes the return of the Holy Family.

*When Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the child. Who arose, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

The angel did not appear immediately after Herod's death, but some time after, probably when the tumult had abated which had arisen in Judea after the death of Herod. Joseph returned with the Infant Jesus and His Mother when Archelaus was reigning in Judea. The admonition of the angel was: *Arise, and take the child, &c.* He did not say into what part of the land of Israel, or into what city he was to go. Hence, Joseph, on arriving at the

confines of Israel, and hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the place of Herod, his father, he feared to go there. Judea is here taken to mean the whole region occupied by the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, that it may be distinguished from the land of Israel, which included the whole land occupied by the people of God, and which also distinguishes it from Galilee, of which we must now make mention.

St. Joseph had thought of going into Judea, in which Christ was born, and in which His house and temple were situated, and he wished to take up his abode there. But he feared Archelaus because of his cruelty. The news of the return of the Infant Jesus would soon be carried to him, and he, like his father, might seek to put Him to death. Divinely admonished, he went into Galilee, where Herod Antipas was tetrarch. This man was of a much milder disposition and character than his brother Archelaus. Joseph, therefore, coming into Galilee, dwelt in the city called Nazareth, which was the city of Mary and Joseph, and the place where Christ was conceived and became incarnate, *that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets, that he shall be called a Nazarite.*

In this dolour we have not only to compassionate Mary in all that she had to suffer, but to learn to imitate her heroic fortitude in suffering unjust persecution. She was innocent, her Son was the only-begotten of God, and the children of Bethlehem were innocent; yet all were afflicted by the unjust persecution of men. We should, therefore, learn to bear with patience and fortitude the like persecutions, remembering that we are not entirely innocent, but guilty of so many offences against God.

Whilst we reflect upon this mystery, let us implore Mary to extend to us that loving care with which she watched over the Infant Jesus, and to share with us her sorrow, that we may in the spirit of true contrition weep for our many errors and sins.

## THE THIRD DOLOUR.

*The Three Days' Loss.*—The circumstances of this dolour are narrated by the Evangelist St. Luke (ii. 41-52).

*And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch. And when he was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem seeking him. And it came to pass that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.*

The Evangelist tells us in the above narrative, that when Jesus was twelve years old He went up to Jerusalem with His parents to celebrate the feast of the pasch. It would seem from the words of the Gospel that He had gone there for the same celebration both before and after this event. His parents were accustomed to go every year to the celebration of this feast, and it is very likely that they took our Saviour with them.

Several families made this journey together, especially when the distance was long, as is the case between Nazareth and Jerusalem.

It is a distance of about thirty leagues, and it took four days to make the journey.

When the days of the festive celebrations were over, that is, the seven days of the Azymes, Mary and Joseph set out on their journey homewards. It was not required by the law that all pilgrims should remain at Jerusalem for the whole seven days; but, from the words of St. Luke, *having fulfilled the days*, it appears that the Holy Family remained in Jerusalem for the week on this occasion.

At their departure the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, not by mistake or chance, but by the divine appointment and counsel. Christ wished at that age to give some public manifestation of His wisdom, that men might begin to prepare themselves for the reception of His Gospel when the time should come for announcing it. At the age of thirty He will announce to them the Christian law, and they will have no excuse for saying, as they did afterwards: *How comes this man by this wisdom and miracles* (St. Matt. xiii. 54), *and how came he to know letters, as he never learned them.*

*And his parents knew it not.* In this there was no fault of negligence or want of care on the part of the parents. They prudently thought that He would be with some others of the company; for when the Jews went up to the feast of the pasch in Jerusalem, they used to go and return in companies. Mary and Joseph, therefore, thought that He would be in the company of the inhabitants of Nazareth, their own relatives and friends; and amongst these they afterwards thought to find Him. This the Evangelist says expressly: *thinking that he was in the company*—that no suspicion of negligence or want of care might be imputed to His parents.

We may suppose that it was by the special providence of God that He remained behind in Jerusalem without His parents perceiving it. He wished to remain there alone, and therefore con-

concealed Himself in such a way that His absence was not perceived for a whole day. There are also other reasons assigned for His having concealed His intention of remaining after them in Jerusalem ; but in reference to them we need only remark that Christ did not leave His parents except when His Father's glory required Him, and He did so then in order to teach us that when God calls us to any duty or state in life, all earthly ties and claims must be renounced in order to correspond to and follow that call. When night approached, and Mary and Joseph, engaged in heavenly conversation and meditation, arrived at the station, or hospice, they expected that Jesus would come to them to refresh and rest Himself ; and when He did not come, then they perceived that He was lost, and began to seek *him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance*. What anxiety ! What trouble and sorrow for Mary and Joseph ! What will they do ? They must return to Jerusalem in search of Him. As it was then night, they must wait till the next day before starting on the return journey to Jerusalem : Spending that night without sleep, in the early morning they went back on their journey ; they inquired for Him all along the way, especially at the several stations, or places of rest for travellers, and asked everyone, in words similar to those of the Sacred Canticles : *Have you seen him whom my soul loveth ?* (Cant. iii. 3).

They spent the whole of that day on the return journey, along the road which they had travelled the day before. On the third day after their departure from Jerusalem, they went about the city in search of Him : probably they went to houses of friends where they were known, and not finding Him they direct their steps to the temple. At length here they found Him in the exterior court of the temple, where the doctors were accustomed to expound the law. In this place a great multitude had assembled, as if to listen to a sermon, and Jesus was there, *sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions*.

The divine Child was on one of the seats of the hearers, not on the bench of the doctors. He was hearing them, and asking them questions for the sake of hearing them explained, and also answering questions that were proposed to Him, as to a disciple or scholar. By His answers He taught the masters and doctors themselves, *so that all were astonished at his prudence and his answers.* They admired the modest manner in which He gave His answers, and were astonished at their truth and wisdom, and the intelligence which He showed, far beyond His years. His parents wondered at this—not at His wisdom, which they well knew, and at which they could not be astonished, but they wondered at this new action of His, and the position in which they found Him. *And his mother said to Him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

Mary spoke to her Son, not immediately or in public, but privately, and when alone with Him afterwards. Her words were not words of reproach, but of wonder and sorrow. She did not ask Him why He did that; for she knew that it must be through some all-wise and all-holy motive that He acted; but she asked why He had done so to them, as it was the cause of so much sorrow to them because they did not know of it. Emphasis is to be laid on the words *sic* and *nobis*, *so* and *to us*.

The parents sorrowed, not because they thought the child had gone astray, or was lost, in the sense that *lost* could be applied to a mere human being, for they knew that this could not happen to Him who was the Son of God; but they sorrowed because they were deprived of His presence, and they knew not what the divine purpose was in this mystery.

And He said to them: *How is it that you sought me?*

These are the first words narrated by the Evangelists as having been spoken by the lips of Jesus, the Incarnate Wisdom.

This answer has the appearance of reprehending, but in reality this is not the meaning to be extracted from His words. Our



Lord could not reprehend His parents for looking after Him to find Him, and for doing that which was a duty of piety and charity. He spoke to them in these words: (1) Because had they known in what manner and for what reason He was then employed in His Father's business, they would not try to take Him away from it, and it would not have caused them so much sorrow. (2) He wished to teach us that besides earthly parents, we have a heavenly Father to obey, and, therefore, His words are not to blame them, but to instruct us.

*Did you not know?* that is, as if He had said: "You could have known, and you do indeed know, that I must be engaged in the work which has been entrusted to me by my Father;" thus, as the only-begotten Son of God He refers to His Father.

*And they understood not the words which he spoke unto them.*

The meaning of this is, that they did not understand what that business of His Father was, or how it was promoted by His remaining after them in the temple. They knew indeed in general that His Father's business was that He, by His teaching, His suffering, and His death, should become the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, for which preparation was being made remotely by His manifestation to the doctors in the temple.

Fr. Faber remarks: "All things were not clear to our Lady. As our Lord, at seasons, veiled the operations of His Sacred Heart from her sight, so sometimes the future was not present to her, nor the whole mystery of the present understood. She hung upon Jesus for everything, and it was her joy that everything was His, and nothing was her own." \*

His parents did not clearly understand the words of the Son of God, but with a lively and humble faith they adored the profound sense which they knew them to contain, and, leading the divine Child with great joy at having found Him, they returned to their home in Nazareth, where, although gifted with such wisdom that

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\* "Foot of the Cross," p. 179.

He in no way needed the teaching of His parents, He remained with them and was subject to them.

*And his mother kept all these words in her heart.*

When the Evangelist says of His Mother alone, and not of St. Joseph, that she kept the words and actions of Christ stored up in her soul, he wished to signify two things : (1) The singular diligence of Mary in observing all the mysteries of the Incarnate Word ; and (2) her great faith and knowledge from which that observation proceeded. This made her regard everything which she saw done by Him as a divine document, to be transmitted to His children.

*And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.*

By those words the Evangelist gives the summary of the life of Christ till His thirtieth year, and at the same time he signifies how wonderfully the wisdom of Christ, which appeared so great at the age of twelve, became still more manifested in the eighteen following years. During that time He was employed in the workshop of St. Joseph until the death of that saint, and afterwards He is supposed to have followed the same art by Himself, as we gather from the references made to this in the Gospels as to what His enemies said of Him afterwards : *Is not this the carpenter's son ?* (Matt. xiii. 55.) *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary ?* (Mark vi. 3.) *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? How then saith he, I came down from heaven* (John vi. 42).

#### FOURTH DOLOUR.

*The Meeting Jesus Carrying His Cross.—And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew, Golgotha, &c. (St. John, xix. 17).*

This meeting of Jesus with His sorrowful Mother on the way to Calvary, is known to us only by tradition. It is not found in the Scripture, nor in the writings of the ancient Fathers. It is, however mentioned in the writings of the more recent Fathers. St. Bonaventure refers to it in his meditations on the life of Christ; and in the private revelations of St. Bridget it is said that Mary was present not only on the way to Calvary, and when Jesus was crucified, but that she was also present at the scourging, which opinion is expressed also in the hymn of the Church :—

Pro peccatis suæ gentis  
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,  
Et flagellis subditum.  
Vidit suum dulcem Natum  
Moriendo desolatum,  
Dum emisit spiritum.

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,  
She beheld her tender Child  
All with bloody scourges rent.  
For the sins of His own nation  
Saw Him hang in desolation  
Till His spirit forth He sent.

There is nothing more natural or reasonable than to suppose this meeting of the Mother and Son at such a time. It is quite certain from the Gospel narrative that she was on Calvary when He was crucified, and that she stood at the foot of the cross. The news of His Passion would certainly reach our Blessed Lady after Christ was taken. St. John, or one of the other Apostles, or one of the holy women who accompanied her to Jerusalem, would be sure to bring her the news of what was going on. It is, therefore, very probable that long before He was condemned to death she had come forth from her house in order that she might see Him and participate in His sufferings, moved as she was by maternal love and sorrow. It is most reasonable to suppose that on hearing the sentence of death she would try to make her way to the place of crucifixion, to be with Jesus in His last moments, and on the way she would either meet Him or wait for Him; and, according to tradition, represented in the Stations of the Cross, it was after the first fall of Jesus under His cross that He met His most holy Mother.

We must not suppose that Mary was one of the pious women of Jerusalem to whom Jesus afterwards spoke the words: *Weep*

*not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.* These pious women were moved only by human pity and affection, which they would have probably felt for any criminal enduring the like tortures, and through that natural pity and compassion they wept. Christ did not blame them for this, for although their sorrow and compassion was not supernatural, it was good and praiseworthy. Their notion or view of the mystery that was taking place before their eyes was mistaken, and this our Saviour wished to correct or rectify. They thought that He was forced to suffer like an ordinary weak man, that He was guilty, and that He could not now help it or save Himself. They did not understand the cause of His death, nor the sin of those who were putting Him to death, and therefore Christ said to them: *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us: and to the hills: Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?* (St. Luke, xxiii. 28, et seq.) The erroneous idea of those pious women cannot be attributed to the Blessed Virgin, and neither do the words of Christ, addressed to them, apply to her; and we must not, therefore, regard her as one of them. She also wept and sorrowed bitterly, but she gave no external manifestation of the sorrow, either in word or gesture, by which she might attract the attention of the sacrilegious multitude.

The question as to whether the Blessed Virgin became unconscious, or fell into a faint or swoon on this occasion, or at any other portion of the Passion history, may here be treated, and in this I wish to follow and adopt the opinion of the pious and learned author, Suarez, which is the opinion also expressed by Benedict XIV. in his writings on this subject for the Feast of the Seven Dolours.

The Latin word used to signify this swooning is *spasmus*, and there is the famous painting of Raphael entitled the *Spasmo*, which represents the Blessed Virgin as swooning, or fainting, on the occasion of meeting our Saviour carrying His cross.

This swooning, or fainting, taken as a corporal defect, with the senses confused and disturbed, and the contraction of the muscles and members, &c., is not to be attributed to the Blessed Virgin. She was guilty of no such weakness or corporal defect, inasmuch as it would be a great imperfection. It would also be derogatory to her exalted grace and to the complete dominion which she always retained and exercised over all her faculties, all her motions, and all her actions. This would have been a voluntary weakness in her which she could have prevented, and a voluntary losing of her senses and consciousness which would amount to a serious imperfection, and thus it cannot be imputed to the Mother of God.

St. John the Evangelist tells us that at the very time Jesus was suffering His most bitter agony on the cross, Mary was *standing*, and she did not fail either in body or soul. When we think of her standing there in the midst of all His enemies and all the terrible scenes of Calvary, without fear, without weakness, and with full strength of soul and body, we cannot suppose her failing or fainting at any other scene of the Passion. If the fainting were to overcome her, it would have arisen from the greatness and poignancy of her sorrow; but the cause of this sorrow was at its highest force when Jesus was hanging nailed to the cross, and dying between the two thieves, and, as St. John does not tell us that she swooned or fainted then, but, on the contrary, stood at the foot of the cross, we cannot suppose her falling into an insensible state when she met Him carrying His cross.

The whole reason of this is, as I have already stated, because the Blessed Virgin retained always full dominion over all her affections and her actions, and she so regulated her conduct as not

to permit anything unseemly and indecorous in any of her movements. And it would be unbecoming had she allowed the inferior movements of sorrow and of corporal pain to take away even for a time her reason. This she did not allow. Although her suffering was the most oppressive and painful ever endured by a human being after Christ Himself, yet she moderated her feelings in accordance with the divine will, that through her constancy and fortitude her dolours might be consecrated to promote the fruits of the Passion in the salvation of men and the greater glory of God.

If it were necessary, the divine power and grace would have been extended to her for the purpose of sustaining her against being oppressed by the weight of her sorrow. This power did sustain her in an extraordinary manner throughout the whole history of the Passion; so that she not only did not give way to bodily weakness, such as fainting, but we cannot attribute to her any noisy wailings or violent gestures, or anything signifying inordinate emotions; so that Suarez condemns those who represent her as clamorous and uncontrolled in the manifestation of her grief and affliction.

When some grave authors attributed to the Blessed Virgin weakness and fainting, we must not understand them to speak in the sense of attributing to her that which would involve an imperfection such as the loss of her consciousness, but only of her vehement sorrow, joined with a great admiration and a kind of stupor, in which they did not consider any fault or imperfection. Some authors, on the other hand, go so far as to assert that our Blessed Lady did not weep or shed tears during the Passion. In this opinion we need not agree with them. Weeping and shedding tears would not take away from her constancy or her faith. This would not imply any imperfection. Tears are not a proof of weakness or inconstancy, and we know that Christ wept over Jerusalem, and over the tomb of Lazarus, and it is, therefore,



with good reason that the Church sings of our Blessed Lady in her sorrow :—

Stabat Mater dolorosa  
Juxta crucem *lacrymosa*,  
Dum pendebat Filius.

At the cross her station keeping,  
Stood the mournful Mother *weeping*,  
Close to Jesus to the last.

We may, therefore, represent the Blessed Virgin as acting in a most perfect and supernatural manner on this occasion, different from the manner of acting of other women under similar circumstances. We do not, as Fr. Ventura says, hear her complain of the cruelty of His enemies, nor of the injustice of the judges, nor the barbarity of the soldiers, nor the blind rage of the people. She does not even attempt to force her way through the crowd so as to reach our Saviour, that she may press Him to her heart and offer Him some consolation. No ; but repressing the vehemence of her maternal tenderness, commanding her affections and concentrating them in the interior of her heart, rent with the pangs of all the sorrow of which it was capable, she accompanied Jesus in silence, as Abraham accompanied his son Isaac to the place of sacrifice.

Father Ventura further reflects on this mystery,\* that as Mary was the first of the predestined, so was she first in walking in the way of salvation—practising the Gospel teaching even before it was promulgated. She was the first to conform herself to the precepts of Christ by taking up her cross and following Him to Calvary, there to be interiorly crucified with Him. To get to heaven we must go along the road of Calvary, and walk in the footsteps of the Son of God. Mary will show us the way, and we are safe in her company. They who walk faithfully in the footsteps of her virtues will go direct to their crucified Redeemer. Mary obtains for her children, the disciples of her Son Jesus, heroism and charity ; she conducts and guides them by the sublimity of her example. She shows them the way as the children

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\* “ La Mère de Dieu,” Part ii., Chap. vi.

of her love and her sorrow, and opens to them, by her intercession, the gates of eternal life.

#### FIFTH DOLOUR.

*Mary Standing at the Foot of the Cross.*—St. John introduces in his narrative of the crucifixion, mention of those who were nearest to our blessed Saviour in devout affection, and who were bound to Him by the nearest of earthly ties. He places on record the presence of Mary with two other women at the foot of the cross, by the words: *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen* (St. John, xix. 25).

In considering this dolour, which represents Mary's sorrow at the crucifixion and death of our blessed Saviour, we need only analyze the words: *Stabat juxta crucem Jesu, Maria mater ejus—There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother.*

*There stood.*—This tells us the position of Mary on Calvary. She stood, her body erect and elevated, and her soul still more elevated, contemplating and admiring this sacrament of love and mercy—Jesus Christ on the cross. She stood there exercising an act of obedience, by offering up her Son to His eternal Father, and conforming herself, in the midst of all His sufferings, to the divine will. She had not less fortitude than the mother of the Machabees, of whom it is written: *Now the mother was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men, who beheld her seven sons slain in the space of one day, and bore it with a good courage, for the hope that she had in God. And she bravely exhorted every one of them in her own language, being filled with wisdom, and joining a man's heart to a woman's thought* (2 Mac. vii. 20, et seq.).

The like fortitude is narrated in the History of the Lives of the Saints, of St. Felicitas, whose seven sons were martyred for Christ, whilst she, their mother, encouraged them by her words and

exhortations. The same is related of St. Symphorosa, who was the teacher and leader of her seven sons in giving up their lives for the Christian faith. Mary, who was Christ's one only earthly parent, and whose Son was the Man-God, stood at the foot of the cross and witnessed His extreme agony. She was prepared to die herself with him, if necessary, for the salvation of the world. She stood, like another Abraham, offering her Son in conformity to the divine will, as He was sacrificing Himself for the redemption of the human race. And, though immersed in a sea of sorrow, she believed with a certain faith, and looked forward with a firm hope to the day and hour of His resurrection. *Juxta crucem Jesu—By the cross of Jesus.* According to the testimony of the three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there were many women present when Christ was crucified; but they, in the words of St. Mark, were looking on afar off (xv. 40). Afterwards some of them came nearer, and stood with Mary, His Mother, by the cross, as St. John tells us. One of these was Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and sister to the Blessed Virgin; the other was Mary Magdalen, that loving, watchful soul and earnest penitent. St. John also was there, that Apostle remarkable for his calm courage, his virgin purity, and divine love. In this company we may approach the cross, and there dwell upon Mary's sorrow during the three hours' agony of Christ.

She heard the insults of the Jews: *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.* These were the words of the spectators on Calvary. The Chief-priests and Scribes said: *He trusted in God; let him now deliver him if he will have him.* She heard all these blasphemies, and they were to her as many pangs of sorrow as there were words uttered, seeing that all His pain and all His blood were not sufficient to slake the thirst of their cruelty. In vain had the inspired son of Sirach taught them: *Laugh no man to scorn in the bitterness of his soul: for there is one who humbleth and exalteth, God who seeth all* (Ecc. vii.).

She heard Him praying for His enemies, and for His very executioners, and uttering words of pardon and consolation to the good thief. She witnessed the fulfilment of all the prophecies in His ignominious death. She was, it is true, in entire conformity with the sentiments of her beloved Son, and much as she abhorred the awful crime of deicide, of which they were guilty, she, nevertheless, forgetful of her own sorrow, prayed for the executioners and the hard-hearted Jews. She felt, as it were, her heart divided in two by the love of Jesus, of whom she was the natural Mother, and by the love of us, her children by adoption. The penitent thief was helped towards his conversion by the prayers of Mary. Of this, St. John Damascene says: "The good thief repented, because Mary, standing between his cross and the cross of her Son, offered her prayers to Jesus for the thief, thus recompensing him for the former favour which she had received." He here refers to the tradition that on the occasion of the flight into Egypt, the Holy Family was well received and entertained by a gang of robbers. The son of one of the robbers, who was then a child, is supposed to be the thief converted on the cross through the prayers of Mary, and now venerated by the Church as St. Dimas.

Whilst she listened to the other thief blaspheming Christ, it must have in some measure touched her heart with tender compassion on hearing the words of that converted thief, when he said to his companion: *Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation, and we indeed justly: but this man hath done no evil;* and then added his words of faith and repentance: *Lord, remember me when thou comest to thy kingdom.*

What can we say of her suffering at the thirst endured by her dying Son? She understood the pain and suffering of the physical thirst, and saw them offer Him the vinegar to drink, in order to cause Him still more pain. She understood also better than any other creature what Christ suffered by reason of the mystical

thirst. The physical thirst is regarded as one of the most painful of natural sufferings ; of which we hear Samson complaining, when he cried to the Lord in the words : *Thou hast given this very great deliverance and victory into the hand of thy servant : and behold I die for thirst, and shall fall into the hands of the uncircumcised* (Judges, xv. 18).

Christ manifests His thirst, and Mary could not even offer Him a drop of water to relieve that burning pain. St. Augustine, speaking of the mystical thirst, says : “ Thy thirst, O Lord ! is my salvation. Thy food is my redemption.” This Mary understood, and she could only offer Him her own pure heart to appease that thirst, and ask Him to accept its affection and its sorrow for this purpose.

Finally, she heard Him cry out in His desolation : *My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?* At hearing these words she now understands that there is no consolation for Him in that moment. His disciples had abandoned Him, and the Jews had delivered Him to torture and death, and now He feels in His soul the dereliction of spirit signified by these words. He felt abandoned by His eternal Father, which was the consummation of all His sufferings, and had not the consolation awarded to just souls in the midst of their torments, for they receive comfort from God, which Christ does not now receive : *Clamaverunt iusti, et Dominus exaudivit eos et de omnibus tribulationibus eorum liberavit eos.*

After this, she went through the martyrdom of seeing Him die—martyrdom caused by her presence at that death, and by the manner of His dying, and all the circumstances surrounding His death-bed. There is no greater martyrdom for a mother than to be present at the painful death of a beloved child. It was only the death of the first-born that caused the Egyptians to permit the departure of the Israelites. The death of Absalom, his rebellious son, caused David to weep and mourn for many days, and he had

not witnessed that death. What, then, must have been Mary's sorrow at that moment of the death of Christ !

"The nature of that martyrdom cannot," as St. Anselm says, "be expressed. It was far more severe and harder to bear than if she herself had been put to death, for she loved her Son more than she loved herself." So great was the martyrdom, that she may be said to have died in her crucified Son.

It is narrated in the acts of the martyrdom of St. Lucian, when he was imprisoned for the faith, that he had no altar on which to have the Blessed Sacrament consecrated, and that he offered his naked breast to the priest, his companion, that the Holy Sacrifice might be celebrated, saying : *Altare erit hoc meum pectus*—"This, my breast, will be an altar." It may be said of our Blessed Lady, at the death of our Blessed Saviour, that she offered up her soul on His dead body, as a sacrifice to God, according to the expression of St. Bernard : "She offered herself on the altar, but that altar was the body of her Son, as it were, dying she lives, and living she dies ; neither could she die, because even whilst living she will be dead."

When we add to this, reflections on the manner of His death, and its circumstances, we may be able to enter still more fully into the depth of Mary's sorrow. It would have been to her a terrible affliction had she seen Jesus die the most honourable and peaceful kind of death ; but here she has to witness the most opprobrious and cruel death that could be endured by man. He dies between two thieves, as if He were the most guilty of all. He dies on the solemn day of the Pasch, that the great number of spectators might increase His dishonour. He dies on the hill of Calvary, so that far and near His ignominy might be made known. He dies, abandoned by His disciples. Mary witnessed all this, and heard His last word from the cross : *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit : and bowing his head, he dies*—inclining His head towards her, as Cardinal Hugo writes, as if He would signify



that forgiveness should be asked through her, because she was the Mother of Mercy.

"Who," says St. Augustine, "thus sleeps at his own free choice as Jesus dies? Who thus, at his own free will, lays aside his garment as Jesus puts off His flesh? How great is His power to be hoped for or feared, when He judges; which appeared so great when He died." And St. Chrysostom reminds us: "It was not that He bowed His head because He expired, but because He bowed His head He expired; by mention of which things the Evangelist showed that He was the Lord of all."

At this moment we may well understand that which was revealed by an angel to St. Bridget: *Non parvum a Deo miraculum factum est, quod Beata Virgo, tot doloribus, intrinsicis sauciata non exhalavit, sed ex speciali omnipotentis Dei dono vitam retinuerit*—"It was no small miracle on the part of God, that the Blessed Virgin, intrinsically tortured by so many dolours, did not expire with her Son, but, by the special gift of our omnipotent God, still continued to live."

#### THE SIXTH DOLOUR.

*The Taking Down from the Cross.*—I think it will be useful to repeat here the Gospel narrative in reference to this dolour, as given in the nineteenth chapter of St. John.

*The Jews, because it was the Parasceve, that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that was a great Sabbath day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, because*

*he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave. He came, therefore, and took away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came, he who at first came to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred weight. They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*

The sixth and seventh dolours bring before us the dead Christ, and Mary weeping and sorrowing over His dead body. Two remarkable things happened immediately after His death that caused fresh pain and sorrow to her afflicted heart, namely, the piercing of His side with a lance, and the taking down of His body from the cross.

The piercing of His side was an outrage, most injurious to Christ, most painful to Mary, and most mysterious to the world. After the death of Christ, and when the crowd had dispersed, many of whom went away striking their breasts like the centurion, and saying, *indeed this man was the Son of God*, Mary remained on Calvary with St. John, Mary Magdalen, and the other holy women. Neither the darkness, nor the earthquake, nor all the noise and confusion of that hour, could move her from the position which she had taken up at the foot of the cross. After a short time they saw advancing towards them some soldiers, who had again come out from Jerusalem; some of those same soldiers who were present at the crucifixion, and who had taken part in it. They approached the crosses of the two thieves, and, finding the victims still alive, they broke their legs. Then they turned to the cross of Christ, and at this moment Mary is represented by St. Bonaventure as placing herself between them and the cross; raising her hands, she besought them with earnest words not to maltreat His dead body, but leave it whole and unmangled, and it was at this instant that one of the soldiers advanced towards the Crucified, and, finding Him already dead, plunged his lance into His side and

pierced through His Sacred Heart. Here we have the literal fulfilment of the prophecy of holy Simeon made to Mary at the presentation in the temple: *And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.*

Christ did not feel the wound in His side, for His body was now dead, but Mary felt as if it had pierced her own soul. It was the last wound inflicted on the sacred body of Christ, and it was the seal, as it were, of His Passion, on which was stamped the cruel tyranny of the Jews, the most loving charity of our Saviour, and the most heartfelt sorrow of His Blessed Mother.

Lanspergius says of it, that "Christ divided this wound with His Mother, so that He might receive the injury of it, and she the pain and sorrow." The same lance penetrated at the same time the body of the Son and the soul of His Mother. The whole pain of this wound was felt by her, for, as St. Bernard says: "Truly, O Blessed Mary, the sword pierced thy soul as the cruel lance opened the side of thy dead Son, inasmuch as His soul was not there, where indeed your soul was." "If," says St. Jerome, "the prick of a needle given to the body of Christ would wound bitterly the soul of Mary, what must have been the pain of her maternal heart when she saw His sacred side opened with the hard, cold iron lance of the soldier, Longinus!"

The blood and water which gushed forth with force from that open side, was sprinkled around the cross and on the ground of Calvary, and many of its drops fell upon Mary's garments, as mentioned in the dialogues of St. Anselm. And, according to the testimony of Baronius, Mary collected a portion of that precious blood and water which came forth from the open side of our blessed Redeemer. The angelic doctor, St. Thomas, attests that in his time, in the pictures of the crucifixion, our Blessed Lady was often represented on the right side of the cross, holding in her hand a precious vessel, in which she received with great reverence the blood and water which flowed forth from the wound in the

sacred side. From this thought, and to signify her all-powerful intercession with her Son, it came to be said that she was the dispenser of that precious blood for the salvation of men, as expressed in the words of St. Anselm: *Mariæ commissa est Dominici sanguinis dispensatio.*

The piercing of our Lord's side was not only a proof of the reality of His death, but that blood and water should then flow from His sacred side was, according to Theophylact, miraculous. This was not the great object for which the Evangelist mentions this incident. It was that we might reflect on its mystical and spiritual meaning. It was a mysterious wound, and we may allude to the following interpretations given by the holy Fathers to this mystery. St. Bernard, treating on the words: *And thy own soul a sword shall pierce*, remarks that the Latin word *transibit*, which means simply *passing*, is not here used; but *pertransibit*, which means *passing through*, and which, according to this doctor, signifies that the sword was to pass through her soul in order to reach to us. Out of this open side, in the first place, came forth the Church, the spouse of Christ, as out of Adam's side Eve was brought into existence, and was called the mother of the living. "This second Adam," says St. Augustine, "inclined His head on the cross, that from thence His wife might be formed, which flowed from His side while He slept. O death! from which the dead obtain second life!" The second meaning, in a mystical sense, is that given by St. Augustine, who remarks that the Evangelist does not say that the soldier pierced His side or penetrated it, but that he *opened* it, as if it were in some sense opening to us the door of life, out of which flowed the sacraments of the Church, through which the precious blood is applied to our souls, and entrance obtained into eternal life. Thirdly, the lance opens in the side of Christ a fountain of grace for men. St. Ambrose says: "From His dead body, incorrupted though dead, flowed forth the life of us all. The water and the blood went forth; the one to

cleanse, the other to redeem. Let us drink, therefore, the price paid for us, that by drinking we may be redeemed." And St. Chrysostom exhorts us to a devout practice by the words: "Since here the sacred mysteries receive their origin, draw near as one about to drink from the very side of Christ." The first fruit flowing from the open wound, was shown in the case of the soldier who opened it with a lance. According to a tradition, to which St. Isidore refers, this soldier, through a chance application of one of the drops of the blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ, received the miraculous cure of one of his eyes, and at the same time his soul was illumined by the light of faith. He was afterwards baptized by one of the Apostles, and became a bishop of the Church, and afterwards a martyr, by giving his own blood for the Christian faith.

Whilst we reflect upon these mysteries, let us not separate them from Mary's sorrows, who, as a spectator of all this scene, might have used words similar to those by which St. John made such a strong and emphatic declaration of the truth, when he said: *And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true: that you also may believe* (St. John, xix. 35).

The taking down from the cross; the placing Him in her arms, and wrapping His body in the winding-sheet, are the other particulars of this dolour.

After the death of Christ, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich nobleman, who was in secret a disciple of Christ, went courageously to Pilate, and obtained, through his influence, and, as some have supposed, through the interest of Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, permission to take away our Saviour's body and to bury it. Some say that it was our Lady's prayers and tears that moved him to do this. Nicodemus, who was another secret disciple, and who was also wealthy and pious, assisted Joseph in this great work of charity. These, with their own hands, took down the body of

Christ from the cross, and this they did within sight of Jerusalem, and before the eyes of a great multitude of people ; notwithstanding that to touch a dead body was considered an unclean action by the law of Leviticus, and much more opprobrious would it be considered for men of their position to touch the corpse of one who had been crucified, as signified by the words of Deuteronomy : *Cursed be every one who hangeth on a tree.*

We have to consider Mary's sorrow at this taking down from the cross. She saw His hands as soon as they were unfastened falling down dead by His side ; His sacred head bent down resting upon His breast, and His whole body lifeless and livid in the hands of His creatures. In the taking down from the cross, St. Bonaventure represents Mary as taking the hand of her Son when it was loosened from the cross and hung by His side ; reverently and tenderly she pressed it to her face and lips, devoutly kissing it and bathing it with her tears.

The sacred body, when taken down from the cross, was placed in her arms, and thus that body may be said to be taken from one cross and placed in another, namely, in the open arms of the Mother of Dolours. He had once said to His disciples in the cenacle : *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world, and I go to the Father* (St. John, xvi. 28). Now He might have said : " I came forth from my Mother, and am come to the cross ; now I leave the cross, and go to my Mother."\*

This returning of Jesus into her arms was a great honour to her ; but it gave her indescribable pain to receive His body cold in death. His soul was not there, it was absent, and she no longer heard His voice or felt His heart beat. His body was present, but much disfigured with *wounds, and bruises, and open sores*. She received the thorn-crowned head of Jesus upon her breast, and tried to extract the thorns from His flesh. She beheld His body

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\* Siniscalchi, " Maria addolorata," Cons. 31.



all covered with blood, as if, in the words of the Patriarch Jacob, some wild beast had been devouring it. Then she is represented as kissing His sacred wounds and bathing them with her tears; and we may well conceive that in the midst of so much sorrow and so much anguish, Mary must have had the one earnest wish and desire to give forth her own life in the embraces of her Son. But this, her holy desire, was not to be granted at this time. She was destined to remain still on earth for the divine work that was appointed to her in the Church, which had come forth from the open side of Jesus, to teach His disciples both by word and example.

The sacred body was wrapped in a winding-sheet, as St. Luke tells us, and St. John says: *They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*

The Blessed Virgin, no doubt, assisted at all those last offices of piety and devotion. She took the crown of thorns from His head; she closed His eyes; she wiped away the blood from His wounds, and she assisted in wrapping up His body in the linen cloths and in the winding-sheet. During the performance of all these acts of reverence and love, she shed abundance of tears, and was so oppressed with sorrow and mental anguish, that we may well apply to her the words of Jeremias: *To what shall I compare thee? or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?* (Lam. ii. 13.)

#### THE SEVENTH DOLOUR.

*The Burial of Jesus.*—The four Evangelists mention this burial of Jesus, which constitutes the seventh dolour of the Blessed Virgin.

St. John says : *Now there was in the place, where he was crucified, a garden : and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man had yet been laid. There, therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand.* Because it was principally the act of Joseph of Arimathea, the other three Evangelists speak of it in the singular number. Thus, St. Mark says : *And Joseph, buying fine linen . . . laid him in a sepulchre which was hewed out of the rock. And he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre.* St. Luke says : *And, taking him down, he wrapped him in fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid.* And St. Matthew says : *And (Joseph) laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way. And there was there Mary Magdalen and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.*

In the consideration of this dolour we may include not only the burial of Jesus, but also the solitude of Mary after His burial until the bright vision of His resurrection on the first Easter Sunday.

The burial of Jesus involves three considerations : The carrying the body to the place of burial, the placing it in the tomb, and the closing of the tomb.

*The Carrying the Body to the Tomb.*—After Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had, with the assistance of the Blessed Virgin and the holy women, wrapped the sacred body in the bandages and winding-sheet, they carried it reverently in their hands to the sepulchre. The sorrowing Mother, St. John, and the other devout women who had remained on Calvary, accompanied the precious remains. The distance was not far, but that funeral was the most mournful that the world ever saw. Angels of peace accompanied that funeral procession, and if angels could weep, they would on this occasion have filled the air with their lamen-

tations. We have a sad example in the Gospel history of the sorrow of a mother who was following her son's corpse to the grave; that is the case of the widow of Naim, on whom Jesus had so much compassion that He miraculously restored the youth to life. Now His own Mother accompanies His corpse to the grave, and her sorrow was at this time the greatest that any creature could endure. Speaking of her state of grief at this scene, whilst the body of Jesus was being carried to the tomb, Fr. Faber says: "There never would have been joy on this planet again, if her accumulated woe had been divided into little parcels, and distributed to each child of Adam as he comes into the world."\* She received no comfort, and she had no one to comfort her now that He is dead.

*The Placing of the Sacred Body in the Tomb.*—In the garden of Joseph of Arimathea a new grave had been cut in a rock, after the manner of the tombs of the Jews. It was outside the city, and not far from the cross. In that new tomb, by the special providence of God, the body of Jesus was laid. As His Passion began in the Garden of Gethsemani, it terminated with His burial in the garden near Calvary. He was placed in a new tomb—new, in that it was one in which no man had been yet laid, for it was the place of holy angels. And, according to the observation of St. Augustine, as He had been conceived in the virginal womb of Mary, so now He was placed in this monument, in which none other before or after Him should be buried. In His death, as it had been at His birth and during His life, the Son of Man had not *where to lay his head*. "Observe," says Theophylact, "the abundance of that poverty which He had taken upon Himself for us; for He who in life had no home, after death also is laid up in the sepulchre of another, and being naked is covered by Joseph."

And St. Augustine remarks on this, "that the Saviour is placed in the sepulchre of another, because He died for the salvation of

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\* "Foot of the Cross," p. 402.

others. For what could He have to do with a sepulchre, to whom death could not properly belong? What was He to do with a tomb on earth, whose seat was in heaven? What had He to do with a sepulchre, who was only in the grave for three days, not so much like one lying in death, as like one resting on a bed?"\*

In this tomb, which was opened not from the top, but on the side, the body of Jesus was laid, and Mary, as described by St. Bernard, took her last farewell of her dead Son. Affectionately kissing Him, she begged to be allowed to continue for a while to contemplate His sacred face. She desired, according to the opinion expressed by St. Fulgentius, to remain buried with Him: "The holy Virgin earnestly wished to bury, in desire, her soul with the body of her Son;" and, in the words of St. Jerome, "she buried in that tomb all her affections;" so that Mary herself revealed to St. Bridget that it could be said that two bodies were buried together in that one tomb of her Son.

*Closing the Tomb.*—When our Lord was laid in the sepulchre, the entrance to it was closed up. Joseph of Arimathea had *rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre*; thus shutting up the grave, and then, according to St. Matthew, he departed. St. Bernard continues his description of Mary's farewell-taking: "When the burial office was over, Mary spread her arms on the sacred rock, or stone, she bathed it with her tears, and kissed it with her lips, in such a way as if to absorb into her own heart that whole sepulchre. Her tears were said to have been seen on the monument, as indicating her intense sorrow." She has now lost sight of her Son, and she can no longer gaze upon His countenance, or hear His words, or be comforted by His presence. His sacred humanity is now hidden away from her, and this brings us to reflect upon Mary's solitude during that night and the following Saturday, until she beheld Him risen from the dead on the Sunday morning. This painful solitude suggests to us the thoughts that must have

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\* Serm. de Sabbat. Sancto.

passed through her mind, the words she may have spoken, and the affections of her sorrowful heart.

After Christ was enclosed in the sepulchre, Mary had at length to take her departure from Him, and we may suppose her last parting words were similar to those attributed to her by St. Bonaventure : " Farewell, my dearest, best beloved Son. Since I may not, must not, stay any longer, I recommend you to your eternal Father's all-wise and almighty care." She had to pass by Calvary and the cross on her way home to the lonely dwelling, and St. Bonaventure represents her as kneeling down and adoring at the foot of the cross, and saying : " Here died my dear, my precious Son ; here He poured forth the generous sea of His blood for man's redemption."

She then returned, in the company of Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, St. John, Mary Magdalen and the holy women. She is represented as thanking Joseph and Nicodemus and the others, and may have used in doing so the words of holy Scripture : *Blessed be you to the Lord, who have shewn this mercy to your Master . . . . and have buried him.*

She went to the residence of St. John, on Mount Sion, accompanied probably by St. Mary Magdalen. There she remained in solitude and in mourning during all that night and the whole of the next day, Saturday, so that we may apply to her the words of the Prophet Jeremias : *How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people ? how is the mistress of the gentiles become as a widow ? . . . . Weeping, she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks ; there is none to comfort her ; all her friends have despised her, and are become her enemies* (Lam. i. 1, 2).

Who can describe the troubles and sorrow of her heart during this time of solitude ! Her thoughts were with Christ in the tomb, according to the axiom, *where thy treasure is, there also is thy heart*. The whole Passion of Christ was vividly before her mind, and impressed upon her imagination, as if it were being

transacted again before her eyes. She herself revealed to St. Bridget that whatever she did, either by speaking, or eating, or working, that Passion was always going on within her heart. Some say that a mutual silence about the events of the Passion was observed between herself and St. John. Others represent them as talking over the recent events, and the different mysteries of Christ's life and death. She is especially attentive to all that St. John tells her about those things that happened at the Last Supper, and the instructions contained in Christ's last discourse to His disciples. It is also probable that on the Saturday she was visited by some of the other Apostles, and that St. Peter came specially to offer her his sympathy, and to weep in sorrow at her feet over his three-fold denial. All these things kept alive the memory of the sufferings which she had gone through, and the reasons for which Jesus suffered and died.

We may here say to her : "O holy Virgin, whilst contemplating you in your lonely solitude after the burial of thy Son, Jesus, I desire to come to you, and, with the Apostles, to offer you my heartfelt love and sympathy. I desire to cast myself at your feet with St. Peter, and there weep over the sins by which I crucified my loving Saviour."

At length on the Sunday morning, at the aurora, Christ appeared to her in His bright and glorious humanity, risen from the dead. We believe without doubt that Christ, after His resurrection, appeared first to His Blessed Mother. This has been stated by all Catholic writers that have treated on the subject. It has been handed down to us by tradition, although not mentioned in the Scripture. It was always understood in this sense by the Church, and the beginning of that tradition cannot be found unless we go back to the time of Christ.

Suarez cites the following Fathers and Doctors as teaching this in their writings: SS. Ambrose, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Sedulius, Anselm, Bonaventure and Rupertus. The



learned Benedict XIV. adopts this opinion, which, he says, is not only in accordance with tradition, but with right reason. It is a tradition which, according to this doctor, no pious soul will deny.

The objection raised from the text of St. Mark, where it is said that He appeared *first to Mary Magdalen* (xvi. 9), may be answered by the interpretation commonly received about the meaning of this text ; that is, Christ appeared to His Mother for the sake of honouring and consoling her, and not to prove the truth of His resurrection, which she firmly believed, and, therefore, it is not mentioned by the Evangelists. The first apparition, as a proof of His resurrection, was to St. Mary Magdalen, who was to be a witness of His resurrection, and the Evangelists mentioned this and omitted the other ; for they did not write all that Christ did, nor all His kind and filial actions towards His Mother, but those only which at the time they considered sufficient for teaching and proving the mysteries of faith.

The Blessed Virgin was not amongst those pious women who, on the Sunday morning early, went, with so much earnest solicitude, to anoint the body of Christ. Although their actions were pious and good, their faith was yet imperfect, and they showed great ignorance about the mystery of the resurrection. The opinion and sentiment of the Church, as held by all her faithful children, is, that the Blessed Virgin remained at home and awaited the glorious advent of her Son, and that she merited the privilege of enjoying that vision before all the others. She was well instructed by the Holy Ghost in all the mysteries of the faith, and she certainly knew and understood this mystery of the resurrection, and therefore she did not come with the other devout women to see the grave ; and she had the happiness of beholding Him a little before His apparition to the Magdalen, which was *when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week* (St. Matt. xxviii. 1).

In concluding this chapter on the Seven Dolours, it may be well to call attention to the various practices of devotion approved

by the Church in honour of those dolours, and especially those to which she has attached indulgences.

1st. There is the Mass of the Seven Dolours, as found in the Missal and the Office which the priests have to recite on the Feast of the Seven Dolours. The most definite and authentic approbation which we find given to any devotion, is when the Church establishes a feast, and a Mass and Office in its honour and for its worthy celebration. Besides the Mass and Office, which belong to priests and Religious, there are many other devout practices which may be made use of by all the faithful, which have the Church's approbation, and to which indulgences are attached, such as the following:—

1. *The Stabat Mater*: The hymn of the dolours, which is sung at our public devotions in the Church at certain times in the year, and which, either in whole or in part, is recited in the usual formula of the Stations of the Cross.

2. An hour spent at any time of the year in meditating on the Dolours of Mary.

3. An exercise in honour of her sorrowing heart.

4. *Seven Aves*, with the *Sancta Mater istud agas*.

5. An hour or half-hour's prayer on Good Friday, or other Fridays, at three o'clock.

6. The following short prayer to the Blessed Virgin in her desolation: "Hail, Mary, full of sorrows; the Crucified is with thee: tearful art thou amongst women, and tearful is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of the Crucified, grant tears to us, crucifiers of thy Son, now and at the hour of our death. Amen. \*

Besides the general advantages to be derived from the devout practice of any devotion, namely, greater purity of soul and conscience, and an increase of God's holy grace, there are special fruits to be obtained through the devotion to the Seven Dolours.

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\* The *Raccolta*—under the title, "Mary Sorrowing."

These special fruits are made known to us by tradition, founded on a private revelation made to St. John the Evangelist. This holy Apostle and Evangelist once heard Mary in heaven ask her divine Son to grant some special favour to those who, on earth, would keep her dolours in remembrance.

Our Saviour promised that He would grant four particular graces to all those who should practise this devotion. These are the four graces :—

1. Perfect contrition for all their sins some time before death.
2. A particular protection in the hour of death—that hour when the divine help is most needed.
3. A lively remembrance of His Passion and sufferings impressed upon their hearts during life.
4. A particular power of impetration granted to the prayers of Mary in their behalf.

Though the revelation on which these promises rest is not a matter of faith, and has no more authority than that which depends on human testimony, there can be no difficulty in receiving that testimony, and in expecting those graces through the devotion to the Seven Dolours. They are graces that seem to be closely connected with the meaning and spirit of this devotion, and that flow from it, according to the traditional promise made by our Saviour to His Blessed Mother.

We can easily believe that those who begin to practise this devotion will soon feel in their souls a sorrow and detestation for the sins which they have committed. The remembrance of the Passion, which was the cause of Mary's dolours, will be more impressed upon their souls. Mary's prayers will have a special power of impetration with God in behalf of such souls ; and the priest who may attend them at the hour of death will find them well disposed for the last sacraments with humble and contrite hearts filled with the love of Jesus and Mary.

As we have considered Christ in His death and burial, and

Mary's sorrow as He was laid in the tomb, let us make that tomb in some sense our earthly resting-place. It will help to sanctify our thoughts and to prepare us for death, according to the words of the wise man : *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for in that we are put in mind of the end of all, and the living thinketh what is to come.\**

The life of Christ is the example of our lives ; His death is the example of our deaths, and His resurrection the cause and example of our future resurrection. Let the grave of Christ be, therefore, the abode of our thoughts, that the death of Christ may sanctify our death until the morning of our future resurrection and the second coming of the Son of God.

I may conclude this work with the prayer taken from the Roman Ritual, and prescribed to be said for the recommendation of a departing soul :—

“I commend thee, dear brother, to the Almighty God, and consign thee to the care of Him whose creature thou art, that when thou shalt have paid the debt of all mankind by death, thou mayest return to thy Maker, who formed thee from the dust of the earth. When, therefore, thy soul shall depart from thy body, may the resplendent multitude of the angels meet thee ; may the court of the Apostles receive thee ; may the triumphant army of glorious martyrs come out to welcome thee ; may the splendid company of confessors, clad in their white robes, encompass thee ; may the choir of joyful virgins receive thee ; and mayest thou meet with a blessed repose in the bosom of the Patriarchs ; may Jesus Christ appear to thee with a mild and joyful countenance, and appoint thee a place amongst those who are to stand before Him for ever. Mayest thou be a stranger to all that is punished with darkness, chastised with flames, and condemned to torments. May the most wicked enemy, with all his evil spirits, be forced to give way ; may he tremble at thy approach in the

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\* Eccles. vii. 2.

company of angels, and with confusion fly away into the vast chaos of eternal night. Let God arise, and His enemies be dispersed, and let them that hate Him fly from before His face; let them vanish like smoke; and as wax that melts before the fire, so let sinners perish in the sight of God, but may the just rejoice and be happy in His presence. May then all the legions of hell be confounded and put to shame, and may none of the ministers of Satan dare to stop thee in thy way. May Christ deliver thee from torments who was crucified for thee. May He deliver thee from eternal death, who vouchsafed to die for thee. May Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, place thee in the ever-verdant lawns of His paradise; and may He, the true Shepherd, acknowledge thee for one of His flock. May He absolve thee from thy sins, and place thee at His right hand in the midst of His elect. Mayest thou see thy Redeemer face to face, and, standing always in His presence, behold with happy eyes the most clear truth. And mayest thou be placed among the companies of the blessed, and enjoy the sweetness of the contemplation of thy God for ever. Amen."

## APPENDIX.

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*Instructions on the Manner of Erecting and Visiting the Stations of the Cross; and on the Crucifix blessed with the Indulgence of the Stations.\**

The Way of the Cross, also called the Stations, is one of the chief devotional exercises whose object is to meditate on the sufferings, cross and death of our blessed Redeemer, and, in the words of Benedict XIV., it is one of the most effectual means “for reclaiming sinners, for reanimating and inflaming the tepid, and for perfecting the sanctification of the just.”

For this reason I wish to add, by way of an Appendix to the History of the Passion, a short instruction on the manner of erecting the Stations, and the manner of performing this devotional exercise. I need not go into the history of this devotion, having already in the course of this work referred to its origin and development. The propagation of this devotion throughout the world in its present form and method, is attributed to the Franciscan Fathers, to whom for the last six centuries, and more especially since the year 1342, the custody of the holy places in Jerusalem has been entrusted. In recent times the most zealous propagator of this devotion was St. Leonard of Port Maurice, who lived in the last century. This saint, during his missionary labours in Italy, erected the Stations of the Cross in 572 different places.

Out of the numerous documents which from time to time were published by the Holy See approving of this devotion, and enriching it with indulgences, I select the most important, which

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\* See a work entitled, “*Instructio de Stationibus S. Viæ Crucis*,” published in Rome, in 1884, by the authority of the Most. Rev. Minister-General of the Franciscan Order, from which these instructions are chiefly taken.



gives ten rules, or admonitions, for the direction of those who have to erect the Stations; and also for those who wish to perform this devotional exercise, and to gain the indulgences attached to it.

These rules were drawn up by the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, by order of Clement XII. They were renewed by Benedict XIV., with some additions necessary for the better establishment of this devotion.

I give the following translation of the Italian copy given by Ferraris, under the title *Indulgentia*, and dated 10th May, 1742, and I subjoin after each rule its explanation, and any modification which it may have received afterwards by more recent decrees or decisions of the Holy See:—

Rule I.—“As the faculty of erecting the Stations of the Way of Cross has been granted exclusively to the Religious subject to the Minister-General of the Friars Minor, as well Observant as the Reformed, it is not lawful for others to erect them, and Stations otherwise erected will not have the indulgences granted to them.”

According to this rule the ordinary faculty of erecting the Stations belongs to the Franciscan Fathers. But the Holy See ordinarily accords to bishops the power or faculty of erecting the *Via Crucis* in all the churches and chapels of their respective dioceses, and of delegating this faculty to their priests. This delegated faculty may also be obtained either directly from the Pope himself or mediately through the Congregation of Briefs, or through the Very Rev. Father-General of the Friars Minor Observant of the Convent of the Ara Coeli, Rome. In the form granting this delegated faculty it is expressly stated that the permission of the Ordinary of the place is required for its lawful exercise (*prævia Rm̃i. Ordinarii loci licentia*). Before erecting the Stations, therefore, it is necessary to obtain this permission. And a general permission, namely, to erect Stations in so many churches or chapels of the

diocese is not sufficient. The place must be designated specifically in each case, and for every erection of the stations.\*

The convents and places subject to the jurisdiction of the Most Rev. Father-General of the Franciscans are exempt from this law ; as are also other monasteries and convents which have the privilege of exemption from episcopal jurisdiction.

The consent of the parish priest, or the superior of the church, or convent, or pious place, as the case may be, is also required, according to a Brief of Clement XII. But by a declaration of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, dated 21st June, 1879, we are informed that the consent of the parish priest is not required for the erection of the Stations in convents and convent chapels of the Sisters of Charity, who have their own chaplains appointed by the bishop, as is the custom in France, and also in these countries to a great extent. The same is to be said for a like reason of other convents and chapels that are exempt either *jure* or *de facto* from parochial jurisdiction.

This permission of the bishop and of the parish priest, or the superior, and also the deputation or delegation granted to the priest to erect the Stations, should be in writing, and must be shown in case of need or when required, under pain of nullity, *ipso facto incurrendæ*, of the erection itself.†

It is also prescribed that all and everything concerning the erection of the Stations of the Cross be done in writing ; that is, not only the permission of the bishop and that of the parish priest, or superior, but also the petition (*postulatio*) for the permission. It does not, however, appear that the petition should be in writing *sub pœna nullitatis*, as this is not expressly mentioned in the decree ; ‡ unless, as it sometimes happens, the petition should embody the permission in its form, and this, as we have said, must be always granted in writing.

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\* See Briefs, "Exponi Nobis," of Clement XII., and "Cum Tanta," of Benedict XIV.

† S. Con. Ind., 30th July, 1748. ‡ 3rd August, 1748.

Rule II.—“They cannot be erected except by the local superiors of the said Order, or in virtue of their delegation by one of their own Religious, who should be a preacher, or at least an approved confessor.”

This rule affects the Franciscan Fathers, and, according to the interpretation given in the “*Instructio de Stationibus S. Viæ Crucis*,”\* we have the following conclusions:—

1. That by the name of superiors is to be understood all those, and only those, who are canonically elected and duly constituted superiors, according to the statutes of the order. These are the Most Rev. Father Minister-General, the Very Rev. Fathers Provincial, and the guardians and superiors of convents; also others, called commissaries, or prefects of missions, with the authority of guardian or superior conferred upon them by the Most Rev. Father-General, and any who have delegated authority from him in regard to the erection of the Stations. Also, in the absence of the guardians or superiors, their vicars, who canonically take their place, and succeed to their authority, have the faculty here mentioned.

2. The difference between the power of the Father-General and the other superiors of the Order as to the exercise of this faculty is, that the lesser superiors can delegate this power only to their own subjects, and the Father-General can delegate it to other priests, both Secular and Regular; and, also, the Father-General can grant to his delegates the power of sub-delegating, which the other superiors cannot. This delegation should be in writing, as explained above in regard to the episcopal permission or consent.† The Franciscans, who are not subject to the General of the Order of Friars Minor Observant, have not the privilege of erecting the Stations of the Cross, or of blessing the crucifix used for that purpose, independently of a particular indult, which they need like other priests.‡

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\* Page 23. † Decr. Auth. n. 175.

‡ Manual on Indulgences, page 150 (Note to Decrees of April 24th, 1735, and Nov. 28th, 1742).

Rule III.—“They should be erected according to the usual form adopted by the above-mentioned Order; that is, let there be Fourteen Stations, and let the crosses or chapels represent the mysteries of the Passion. In places where the Stations have to be erected outside a church, as is the case in many convents of the said Order, let them be so arranged as to commence or terminate in the church or holy place. Care should be taken that the small chapels\* be protected or enclosed against the free entrance of men or beasts, and that the places where the crosses are erected may not be exposed to any irreverence; and if, after their erection, the place should become unfit (*minus decentia*), let the superior prohibit or interdict the Stations there, and on this point his conscience is strictly charged.”

Under this third rule we may consider all that concerns the material of the Stations, and the form of blessing and erecting them.

1st. As to the material which constitutes the Stations. It is evident that fourteen crosses are required, corresponding to the Fourteen Stations in Jerusalem. These crosses are so necessary that the Stations would be entirely invalid without them. And the indulgences are attached to the cross. And this would be the case if, at the time of erecting the Stations, even one of the crosses were wanting.†

The crosses, according to the prescription of the Roman Ritual, should be *of wood*, and this condition is indispensably required by a series of decrees,‡ and they should be visible to those who are present.§ The precept is not satisfied by fastening, or encasing, wooden crosses on crosses of iron or other material as a back support; and crosses painted on the wall would not suffice. The wooden crosses may be gilt, or embellished with ornaments of

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\* Small chapels were erected as Stations, or places for the Stations.

† Decret. Auth. n. 261.

‡ June 20th, 1838; Aug. 22nd, 1842; June 14th, 1845.

§ Decr. S. C. Ind. Nov. 23rd, 1878.

metal, provided the ornamentation be not so elaborate as to make it appear that the crosses are other than wooden. They should not have the figure or image of our Saviour on them.

According to an ancient and general custom, paintings and pictures are used also for the Stations, as many in number as the crosses, and representing the fourteen scenes of the Stations. The first is the sentencing of our Saviour to death; and the last, Christ enclosed in the sepulchre. They are exactly the same as the Stations of the *Via Crucis* in Jerusalem. Although the pictures are not necessary for the validity of the Stations, yet this ancient system of pictures is generally observed, and ought not to be abandoned without some grave necessity, especially as the pictures represent the scenes of the Passion, and thus greatly assist the faithful in meditating and in performing the Stations with attention and devotion. It is also the custom that the crosses be placed over the pictures, as constituting the essential part of the Stations, and although this is not necessary, it is in accordance with the general custom, and any departure from it, such as placing the crosses under or along side the pictures, would be unbecoming and distracting, even though it would not affect the validity of the Stations or the gaining of the indulgences.

2nd. As to the form of erecting the Stations. This consists in the blessing of the crosses and fixing them in their places. The blessing of the crosses is absolutely necessary, so that the Stations would not be validly erected nor any indulgence gained if this were omitted. And the Holy See, in re-validating Stations that were irregularly erected without crosses, or without blessing them, has always ordered that the crosses to be supplied should be blessed privately.\* The images, or pictures, or engravings need not be blessed, as these are not necessary,† and the indulgences are attached to the crosses. However, according to the mode of erection followed by the Franciscan Fathers, and approved by

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\* Confr. Dec. Authent. n. 261 & 442.

† Decision, March 13th, 1837, and Aug. 22nd, 1842.

the Sacred Congregation of Rites, the pictures may be blessed, if there be any (*si adsunt*). This formula of the blessing of the pictures or images is to be found in the Roman Ritual, edited in the year 1880, and it may therefore be followed and used.

The blessing of the crosses may be lawfully and validly given either before or after they are set up in their places.\* The crosses may be fixed in their places even the day before the ceremony of erecting them, and the ceremony may be lawfully performed in this case by blessing the crosses from the altar. It is, however, advisable to go through the usual ceremony of blessing and putting up the Stations at the same time. It would not suffice for the validity of the erection of the Stations to bless the crosses privately at home, and then have them distributed to parish priests and others, to put them up in their churches or other places appointed for them; but it is required that the priest who performs the ceremony should be morally present in the place where the Stations are erected, as is clear from the Brief *Cum tanta*, of Benedict XIV., with the exception that will be mentioned in Rule VIII. concerning enclosed convents.

Moreover, the crosses must be put up. This is necessary in order to gain the indulgences, and as necessary as the blessing itself; because unless they are put up, the Way of the Cross is not determined. And if the Stations of the Cross be removed from a church for a time, the indulgences cannot be gained by those who perform the holy exercise round the church kneeling and praying at the usual places; and, *a fortiori*, the indulgence could not be gained in a church or place where they were never put up.

It is also necessary, by a decree of the 28th August, 1752, that some distance intervene between the Stations. This distance need not be equal to the distance between the Stations in Jerusalem, nor is it in any way determined. But it was represented before

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\* Decision, 21st June, 1879.



the decree of August, 1752, that in some places the whole Way of the Cross was contained within the narrow limits of two or three paces, and then it was that the Sacred Congregation declared that some distance is required between the Stations, from which we can conclude that the distance represented, namely, that of two or three paces for the whole of the Stations, would not suffice.

The Stations need not begin of necessity on the Gospel side of the church, and end at the Epistle side, as some have thought. This is the more general practice ; but the custom of the place, if a custom to the contrary exists, may be preserved.

As regards the validity of the erection, it is not necessary that the priest who officiates at the ceremony should personally set up the different crosses. This may be done by another person, even by a layman. And they may be put up privately and without any ceremony, either before or after the blessing of the crosses,\* from which it follows that it is not necessary that the priest, in erecting the Stations, should perform the exercise of the *Via Crucis*. According to an answer of the Congregation of Indulgences, of August 23rd, 1836, the priest authorized to establish the erection of the Stations may, after having blessed the crosses and pictures, ascend the pulpit, and explain to the people the subject of each Station, and delegate another priest to put them in their places.†

After having erected the Stations, the priest should leave a certificate of the erection, signed by himself *propria manu*.

This is ordained by a decree of the Congregation of Indulgences, of September 25th, 1841. The time is not determined for the drawing up and signing of this document, but it ought to be done as soon as convenient, that no doubt may afterwards arise as to the canonical erection of the Stations in that place. It does not appear that this document is required for the validity of the

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\* Decrees of August 22nd, 1842, and 20th March, 1846.

† Bouvier on Indulgences, page 104.

erection of the Stations, but as a proof of the erection ; and hence its loss or defect would not prevent the gaining of the indulgences, and it can be supplied even after a long interval, provided the canonical erection is well authenticated.

The Rev. A. Maurel, speaking on this subject, explains clearly what the priest has to do after having erected the Stations :—“ Wherefore,” he says, “ to avoid any doubts that may afterwards arise from negligence in the matter, the *proces-verbal*, or report of the erection, ought to be framed as soon as possible. It should mention the Apostolic Rescript, in virtue of which the erection took place, the authorization of the bishop, the permission of the parish priest or superior. It would be well, too, to have some witnesses. The document, or account, must then be forwarded to the bishop, to have it deposited amongst his archives, and a copy of it, or at least a certificate of the erection, is to be kept in the parish register, or in that of the establishment where it has been effected.”\*

The above decree does not apply to the petitions made to the prelates of Religious Orders, or their concessions for the erection of the Stations in places subject to their jurisdiction. But it is very desirable that in conformity to it, a register be kept in each monastery, in which all the erections of the Stations of the Cross made by the Fathers of the community may be entered.

The documents containing the deputation, the permission and consent, need not always be *explicit*, but it suffices that they be *implicit*, or contained one in the other. Thus, if one obtain the *faculty* of erecting the Stations of the Cross in a particular place from the bishop, the *permission* is included in this, and no other separate document is required to show the permission. Also, when the parish priest or superior makes the request in writing for the erection of the Stations of the Cross, no separate document is required to show their consent, as it is implied in the request.

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\* Maurel on Indulgences, English translation, page 152.

In like manner, the rescript itself which grants the priest power to erect the Stations, need not be preserved in the place where the Stations are erected; a copy of it is sufficient, or any authentic document signed by the bishop, or superior, or parish priest, testifying to the faculty of the priest to erect the Stations.

Bouvier, speaking of the documents to be left as a proof of the erection of the Stations, says:—"Unless this be observed, the existence of the Way of the Cross in a church could not be authentically proved; in a short time it would become doubtful, and the gaining of the indulgences attached would become uncertain. But if a *proces-verbal* be not drawn up on the day of erection, or if it were afterwards lost, the erection would not be nullified. As long as there is any positive certainty that all the necessary conditions were observed in its erection, a new one may be formed, but it should be done with all possible expedition.\*

In the case of Stations already validly erected, but which have undergone alteration or repairs, the following decisions are important:—

"According to an answer from Rome, given, in 1826, to the Bishop of Mans, it is certain that the total renewal of the crosses and pictures nullifies all the indulgences, and renders a new erection in due form indispensable. But a decision of August 30th, 1830, declares that if one cross be stolen (or in any other way destroyed) the indulgences attached to the other crosses are not lost, or even suspended."

A decree of the Sacred Congregation, dated 13th November, 1837, gives us a fuller and more definite explanation on this point, according to the following words:—"Since, in order to gain the indulgences attached to the Stations of the Cross, the erection of the pictures is not necessary, but only the erection of the crosses, it follows that if the pictures or images be removed, and other new ones be put in their place, the indulgences remain.

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\* "Treatise on Indulgences," page 103.

And this would be the case even if the crosses themselves were renewed, new ones being put in the place of the old ones ; provided the greater number of those first erected remain, the indulgence also remains." From this we may draw the following conclusions, which have been approved at different times by explicit decisions of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences :—

1. The validity of the Stations of the Cross is in no way affected by the renovation or the removal of the pictures or images, either in whole or in part. Nor would it affect the grant of the indulgence to remove the crosses from the old pictures to the new, provided the place be the same in which the Stations were originally erected.

2. It would not invalidate the Stations, or the indulgences attached to them, if the crosses first blessed should perish or be taken away in less than half the number ; and in this case they may be substituted by others without a new blessing or erection. But if seven are thus lost or removed, then the greater number are no longer there, and a new blessing is needed.

3. If the greater number of the crosses first erected, and, *a fortiori*, if the whole of them be removed or lost, a new erection and blessing of the Stations must take place.\*

Rule IV.—“In the same church or pious place, when there is room enough, it will be well, for the greater convenience of the people, to erect two sets of Stations, one for the men and the other for the women ; and when one set of Stations is erected outside the church, let there be another erected inside when the church is large enough, so that no confusion may arise from the Stations being without ; and that in time of rain, or when otherwise impeded from saying the Stations outside, the people may be able to perform the Stations inside the church.”

Under this rule we may include all that need be said as to the

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\* “*Instructio de Stationibus*,” page 50.

places where the stations are to be erected, and their removal from one place to another.

As regards the places where the Stations may be erected, Maurel says: "The Stations of the Cross may be erected in all churches, public chapels, domestic oratories, &c., and even externally to the churches and oratories, in cemeteries, on hills, or in private apartments. They may be likewise established in several chapels belonging to the same community, as also in the gallery, choir, infirmary, &c., provided the place be a becoming and suitable one.\* To have them erected in these various places, it is sufficient to have a special authorization from the Holy See. At Rome there are some religious houses in which there are as many as three, four, five, and even seven sets of Stations." †

Bouvier tells us that Pius VI. "allowed these Stations to be erected, not only in public chapels and churches, but likewise in domestic chapels and small oratories, and even in private apartments, in order that those who entertain a great devotion towards the Passion of Christ might obtain the graces attached to this holy practice."

Formerly, the Stations were not to be erected in cities, or towns, or districts where they had been already in the churches of the Franciscans, unless the faithful could not avail themselves of these Stations without very great inconvenience. To determine the inconvenience which would warrant the erecting of the Stations in other places than those subject to the Franciscans, was left to the Ordinary to decide. But even this restriction was removed by Pius IX.—*Urbis et Orbis*, 14th May, 1871.‡

As to the temporary removal of the crosses, and their removal from one place to another, we have clear decisions given by the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences. According to these decisions, the blessing and indulgences are not nullified by a removal

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\* Decree, 4th August, 1767. † "English Translation," page 147.

‡ "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," December, 1889.

of the crosses and pictures, to clean, whiten, repair, paint or ornament the walls of the church, if they be afterwards replaced.\*

Still more, they retain the indulgences, although for the purpose of arranging them in symmetrical order, the relative positions of crosses and pictures may be altered after they have been set up, on the supposition that this takes place in the same church or oratory.†

Whilst, however, all the crosses are removed from their places in the Church, the faithful cannot gain the indulgences by saying the Stations before the usual places where the crosses were. The same may be said of the case when the greater number, or even half of the crosses, are removed, but if only one or two crosses are missing from their places, the indulgences are not thereby affected, and the faithful may perform the exercises with the full benefit of the devotion.

The translation, or changing of the Stations of the Cross from one place to another, that is, from one church to another, for example, would necessitate a new erection for the gaining of the indulgences, according to the answer of the Sacred Congregation: "If the Stations of the Cross be removed, as to the crosses, from the place where they were canonically erected, and transferred to another place, the indulgences neither remain in the first place nor go with the crosses to the second place; but a new canonical erection is required."‡ It cannot be determined by any general rule when the place is to be considered different in regard to this matter.

The Sacred Congregation—in an answer given on the 16th December, 1760, to the question: Whether if the said Stations and crosses, removed as above, were placed on the walls of the sacristy or oratory, under a different roof, or in another church, the indulgences would remain?—answered in the *negative* as to a

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\* Decisions, March 21st, 1836; August 2nd, 1842.

† Decrees, August 22nd, 1842, and August 20th, 1844, *apud* Maurel.

‡ Decreta Authentica, N. 270, ad. 4.



different church, and said that in the other case recourse should be had in each particular instance to the Sacred Congregation.

The privilege of the Stations of the Cross does not cease when the church where they have been erected is pulled down, and another new church erected in the same, or almost in the same place and under the same title. But it would be otherwise if the new church were erected in a different place or under a different title.\*

We have now to consider some particulars as to the erecting of the Stations in private houses.

The Stations can only be erected in private houses by virtue of a special Rescript from the Holy See. From what has been said above, it is certain that when the habitation of the family is changed, the Stations could not be removed and set up in the new house without renewing the erection. A different house is here taken to mean not only a separate building, but any separate dwelling-house, such as the different stories of buildings in Paris and Glasgow.

As to whether they can be removed to different cells or rooms in the same house without losing the indulgences, is not clearly defined, especially as the Sacred Congregation declared in a similar case that reference should be made in each particular case to the Holy See.

It is not necessary, in the case of the change of the family residence, to obtain a new Rescript in order that the Stations may be lawfully and validly erected in the new dwelling-house. This may be done by virtue of the Rescript already granted to the family; because the privilege of domestic Stations is personal, and follows the person to whom it is granted, wherever the dwelling-place may be. The case is excepted when the privilege of the Stations would be clearly restricted to a particular place, because then the person is privileged only in that place; but the mere mention of the name of the place, as, for instance, in the parish N., is not understood as a restricting clause.

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\* Decree, 9th August, 1843.

It is also to be noted that by virtue of the Rescript granting domestic Stations, several sets of Stations cannot be erected, as, for example, one in the country house and another in the town, according to the different dwelling-places, unless this be specially granted. The privilege of domestic Stations ceases with the person to whom it was granted, and does not descend to heirs or successors.

I may here call attention to Rule IV. of the Sacred Congregation, which enjoins on superiors the duty of watching over the places where the Stations are erected, and to interdict the exercise in any place, if in course of time it becomes unfit for this devotion. For this reason it may be said that the indulgences of the Stations would cease if the cells, or rooms in private houses, in which they were erected should be turned to profane uses, and this would be the case if they were only thus changed for a time, and the Stations removed from them during that time.

In all cases where, according to the above teaching, a new erection of the Stations is required, all the conditions have to be minutely observed which are prescribed for the original canonical erection.

Rule V.—“Let this exercise be everywhere uniform, and let nothing be changed from the manner in which the Stations have been recited in the convents of the Order ; that is, the Stations of the Cross may be performed in procession by the people, led by one or two priests ; or privately, by each individual. If the Stations be performed in common, let the procession be so arranged that the men may walk separate from the women, that is, the men in front and the women after them. . . . At each Station let a cleric, or priest, read in a loud voice the consideration corresponding to the mystery and the Station, and, after reciting a *Pater* and *Ave* and an Act of Contrition, let them proceed from one Station to another, singing in the meantime, between the Stations, a verse of the *Stabat Mater*, or some other prayer, all observing the greatest

modesty, with silence and attention of mind. It has been found by experience that the Stations thus recited piously and devoutly, have accustomed many of the faithful of every condition to meditation, and moved them to reformation of life."

We have to consider, in connection with this rule, the manner of performing the exercise of the Stations of the Cross, and the conditions required in this devotion for gaining the indulgences attached to it.

Besides the state of grace, and the intention at least in general of gaining indulgences, three conditions are required for gaining the indulgences of the Stations :—1. To meditate on the Passion. 2. To visit the Stations really, that is, to go from Station to Station. 3. The fourteen Stations to be visited on the same occasion.

These three conditions have now to be examined according to the more recent decisions delivered on these points :—

1. In regard to the meditation on the Passion, a question arose amongst authors, whether one should meditate on the special mysteries as represented by each Station, or whether it would be sufficient to meditate on the Passion in general. According to the opinion of St. Leonard of Port Maurice, it is sufficient to meditate on the Passion in general. The "*Raccolta*" settles this question, when it says that for gaining the indulgences it is required that the person performing the Stations should meditate according to his capacity on the Passion of our divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Thus, simple and uneducated persons, who do not know how to meditate, and who could not keep each mystery or Station distinctly before the mind, can gain the indulgences, provided they know in a general kind of way that the crosses and the places which they visit, represent the scenes of the Passion where the Son of God endured His bitter sufferings, and sacrificed His life for our redemption.

No vocal prayers are prescribed as necessary for gaining the

indulgences. Thus, the recital of the *Pater* and *Ave* at each Station, and at the end the six *Paters* and *Aves*, as sometimes said, is not necessary. The same may be said of the *Adoramus te, Christe, &c.*, the Act of Contrition, and the *Miserere nostri, Domine*, as is clear from the “*Raccolta*.”\*

The practice of saying these prayers, and reading the considerations or points of reflection, as found in pious books, is very good, and most useful in enabling persons to perform this exercise with profit. Hence, the Sacred Congregation has admonished us not to neglect it.

2. The visiting the Stations really, that is, going from Station to Station, is also a condition required for gaining the indulgences, with some modifications. In the first place, however near the pictures and crosses may be, it would not suffice merely to look upon one after the other from the same spot. This, as Bouvier says, could not be properly termed the Way of the Cross—an imitation of Jesus Christ proceeding to Calvary. This is evident from an answer given by the Sacred Congregation † to the following doubt that was proposed on the subject: Whether the faithful, in a great concourse of people, and especially when the church is full of devout people, may gain the indulgences of the Stations without moving the body from one place to another? The Sacred Congregation answered *No*, without a special pontifical indulgence. And all the pontifical decrees affirm, amongst the other conditions of the Stations, that some motion of the body is required; and that one should go from one Station to another as far as the multitude of people will permit, or the limits of the place where the Stations are being performed.

This is more fully explained by another decree of the Sacred Congregation, ‡ in which the following method is prescribed: For the public exercise of the Way of the Cross, when confusion and inconvenience might be occasioned, the manner of saying the

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\* Decree of June 2nd, 1838. † 26th February, 1841. ‡ 6th August, 1757.

Stations proposed by St. Leonard of Port Maurice may be observed, namely, that the people remain in their places whilst the priest, with two or three clerics or cantors, goes round, and stops at each Station, and there recites the customary prayers, the others answering.

From this explanation we may draw the following conclusions :—

1. When the Stations are said privately, one must go from one Station to another in order to gain the indulgences.

2. The same has to be done when the Stations are publicly said, if there be room enough, and no danger of disturbance or confusion.

3. If there be no room, or if any danger of confusion and inconvenience exist, then the method prescribed by St. Leonard may be observed, and in this case the people should be admonished to turn towards the different Stations, and to kneel and stand at the same time with the priests and clerics who go round the Stations.

The third essential condition for gaining the indulgences of the Stations is, that all the fourteen Stations be visited on one and the same occasion. Up to a recent date, the prevailing impression in France had been that it was not necessary to go through all the Stations on the same occasion. But, by a decree dated December 14th, 1857, approved by His Holiness Pius IX., January 22nd, 1858, the Sacred Congregation decided the contrary.

It has to be remarked on this point, that any slight interruption would not prevent a person from gaining the indulgences. Thus, to interrupt the Stations in order to hear Mass, to receive Communion, to go to Confession, and to resume them afterwards, would not be considered a notable interruption, or sufficient to destroy the moral unity of the devotion of the Stations; and, after such short intervals, there is no necessity to begin the Stations over again, but it is sufficient to resume them where one left off.

Rule VI.—“When the Stations are performed privately, it is not necessary, as some suppose, to recite six *Paters* and *Aves* at each Station ; but it is sufficient to meditate, however briefly, on our Lord’s Passion, which is the work enjoined, in order to gain the holy indulgences, and for simple people it will be sufficient to think in some manner, according to their capacity, on the aforesaid Passion : although all are exhorted, without placing on them any obligation, to recite, conformable to the usual custom, a *Pater* and *Ave* at each cross or Station, and to make an Act of Contrition.”

In this rule the manner of performing the Stations privately is prescribed. From it we learn that anyone may perform this devotion singly in the church where it is established, use whatever prayers he pleases, and consecrate as much time to the exercise as he pleases, provided that He piously meditates on the Passion of our Lord. And persons not knowing how to meditate may content themselves with pious thoughts on some circumstances of the Passion, according to their capacities. Nevertheless, without imposing any obligation on them, they are exhorted to recite a *Pater* and *Ave* before each cross, and to elicit an Act of Contrition.\*

Rule VII.—“When the Stations of the Cross are erected in a church, let the faithful abstain from performing the exercise during the time of the divine office or services, and of the holy Mass ; and when there are so many people in the church that the Stations could not be said without causing confusion and annoyance, especially when the Stations have to be visited one by one.”

This rule also regards the devotion when said privately. And in the decree of the 6th August, 1757, it is said that to bishops is given the faculty of prescribing a convenient time for performing this holy exercise in the different churches. The rule means that people have not to be disturbed or distracted when hearing Mass,

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\* Decree, Feb. 16th, 1839. *Apud* Maurel, Eng. Trans., page 146.



or attending at the public devotions of the Church, by devout souls who might be inclined at such times to go round the Stations, and to put themselves in the way of others. It does not imply any prohibition against saying the Stations during Mass, or at other times, when this can be done quietly, without causing disturbance or annoyance to the congregation.

Rule VIII.—“When the Stations of the Cross have to be erected in some convent or monastery of nuns, it is not necessary to enter the enclosure; but it is sufficient . . . with the permission of the ordinary, to bless the crosses at the grate, and to give a short instruction to the nuns, and to others who may reside in the convent, on the manner of making the Way of the Cross in order to gain the indulgences, and to gain for their souls the benefit of this devotion.”

This rule applies only to enclosed convents, and it represents the case in which the moral presence of the priest is considered sufficient in the erecting of the Stations.

Rule IX.—“Let it not be published from the pulpit, or in any form whatever, and much less let it be written, either in the chapels, or on the Stations themselves, that a certain and determined number of indulgences may be gained (by this exercise), because it is known that these indulgences very often, either through inadvertence or equivocation, or through an impulse of devotion (on the part of preachers or teachers), have been altered or confused; and, therefore, let it be sufficient to say that whosoever shall meditate on the Passion after the manner of this holy exercise, may, through the concessions of the Sovereign Pontiffs, gain the same indulgences as by personally visiting the Stations of the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem.”

Catechists, preachers and others are, therefore, forbidden to specify in detail, particularly by writing or engraving where the Stations are, the number of indulgences attached to this devotion. Maurel, treating on this point, says:—“One of the reasons of this

prohibition may have been the loss of many Briefs, by which the Holy See had applied several rich indulgences to that pious practice, and which, it is said, were destroyed at Jerusalem on the occasion of the burning of the archives belonging to the Franciscan Friars there. The instructions, however, assign a different reason; for, in the rule referred to, it is expressly stated as having been ascertained on more occasions than one, that either through malice, negligence, or excessive zeal, the truth of the indulgences had been so altered as to render them altogether obscure and uncertain.\*

It is, however, certain that the indulgences attached to the exercise of the Way of the Cross, are the same as those which may be gained by a personal visit to the Stations of the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem.

There were some authors who taught that the faithful, in performing the Stations of the Cross, could gain not only the indulgences that were specially granted to the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem, but also all the indulgences granted to the other sacred places of the Holy Land. This opinion was founded on the words of the Constitution, *Inter Plurima*, of Benedict XIII. But the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, in its admonitions, edited by special command of Clement XII., and in Rule IX., mention only the indulgences of the Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem, and we have not sufficient authority for enlarging on this. This is the opinion of St. Leonard of Port Maurice, and of most authors who treat on the subject, and it is the safest opinion to hold and to teach.

These indulgences are very numerous, both partial and plenary, and they are applicable to the souls in purgatory, as they are contained in the "Raccolta," by a decree of Pius IX., *Urbis et Orbis*.†

For this reason it may be recommended to have the Stations

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\* English translation, page 144.

† 30th September, 1852.

erected in all Catholic cemeteries, that these indulgences may be applied for the souls in purgatory by devout souls who visit and pray at the graves of their departed friends and relatives.

Besides the plenary indulgence, therefore, which a person can gain for himself, he may apply all the others for the relief of the souls in purgatory. The general application suffices, according to the usual practice of the Church; but if a person should desire to restrict the application of one of the plenary indulgences to any one particular soul, this must be specially determined and applied for that soul. And since we do not know the number of indulgences to be gained by the Stations, it is advisable always to make the general as well as the particular application. St. Leonard advises us to make this application before the beginning of the Stations, or, at all events, before their conclusion.

In order to gain the indulgences of the Stations, Confession and Communion are not prescribed, and not necessary, as long as the soul is in a state of grace.

As to whether the indulgences of the Stations may be gained more than once in the same day; according to an answer given by the Sacred Congregation,\* it was declared that it was not certain from existing documents that the indulgences of the Stations of the Cross could be gained as often as the exercise was performed. Speaking on this point theologically, we may say:—

1st. That the plenary indulgences attached to the Stations can be gained only once in the day. This is deduced from a decree of the Sacred Congregation,† which lays it down as a general principle that only once a day a plenary indulgence can be gained, which is conceded to those visiting churches on certain days, or performing some pious work. This is also laid down in the “Raccolta,” in which the *Portiuncula* is excepted, and in this case the exception proves the rule.

2nd. The partial indulgences may be gained, according to the

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\* 10th September, 1883.

† March 7th, 1678.

more probable opinion, several times on the same day, according to the general rule of partial indulgences, namely, that these can be gained several times a day, unless the contrary be expressly stated, and there is nothing to the contrary stated in the concessions of indulgences made by the Sovereign Pontiffs to the exercise of the Way of the Cross.

If the Stations be erected in churches, in public oratories, in cemeteries, or in other public places, the indulgences can be gained by all the faithful who visit them. But if in convents and monasteries and private houses, then the indulgences can be gained only by those to whom the privilege extends. According to the *Stylum Curie Romanæ* in monasteries and convents, &c., the indulgences may be gained by all who dwell in these places, either as members of the community, or inmates, or visitors. In private houses and oratories the indulgences can be gained by those persons to whom the privilege is granted by the Rescript, and their relatives, and also the servants who live in the house.

The indulgences of the Stations may be gained at night as well as in the day time, as expressly declared by a decree of the Sacred Congregation.\*

Rule X.—“Finally, His Holiness the reigning Pontiff (Benedict XIV.), desirous of propagating this devotion more and more amongst the faithful, exhorts all parish priests of every town and city, even though there may be several parishes in a town, to enrich the people committed to their care by introducing amongst them this great spiritual treasure. And this they may do without taking into account the distance between the places where the Stations of the Way of the Cross are erected. Let the erection be performed by a Friar Minor who is subject to the Minister-General of the Observants, and one who may be able to instruct the people in the great utility of this devotion, so that they may

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\* March 1st, 1819.

be moved to practise it with fervour, and to the great advantage of their souls."

The rest of this rule contains instructions about the choice of the father to be made by the parish priest for this purpose ; the limitation of the Stations to the Franciscan Church, and the distance from that convent or church to be determined by the Ordinary for the erection of other Stations in the same town or district, which I need not transcribe here, as this portion has been abrogated by the subsequent decree of Pius IX., *Urbis et Orbis*,\* which declares, on his Apostolic authority, that the Stations of the Cross may be erected in towns even where they already exist in Franciscan churches, and that they may be put up in any place without any limitation of distance whatsoever, *servatis aliis servandis*.

As many irregularities have been committed from time to time in the erections of the Way of the Cross, the Sovereign Pontiffs have sometimes been requested to repair by their Apostolic authority these omissions of essential forms. Thus, Leo XII., by a Rescript of November 16th, 1824, confirmed all the erections of the Way of the Cross in France which had been irregularly established up to that time, and at the same time commanded for the future the strict observance of the decree of the Congregation of Indulgences, sanctioned by Benedict XIV.†

I find also that by virtue of special faculties, the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, on the 31st July, 1881, revalidated all the Stations of the Way of the Cross that had been up to that time invalidly erected.

Finally, His Holiness Leo XIII., on the 15th March, 1884, renewed the faculties granted to the Franciscan Fathers in regard to the Stations, and by his Apostolic authority remedied any defect in the essential forms of the Stations erected up to that date.

*The Crucifixes of the Way of the Cross.*‡—These are crosses with

\* May 14th, 1871. † See Bouvier on Indulgences, page 105.

‡ Translated from the "Instructio de Stationibus."

the image of our blessed Redeemer to which the indulgences of the Stations are attached. The use of these crucifixes originated with the Franciscan Fathers in the beginning of the year 1773, in their monastery of St. Bonaventure, in Rome, and the indulgences of the Stations were first granted to them by Pope Clement XIV.

The petition to the Holy See for the grant of this indulgence was as follows :—"Persons who are sick, at sea, in prison, or who are in infidel countries, or who are lawfully prevented from visiting the Stations of the Cross, prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, humbly beg this consolation, that they may be able to gain the indulgence of the Stations . . . by reciting fourteen *Paters* and *Aves*, and in the end five *Paters* and *Aves*, in memory of the divine Passion, holding in their hand a brass crucifix blessed by any Guardian or higher superior, subject to the Most Rev. Father-General of the whole Order in the Convent of the Ara Cœli."

To these supplications the Sovereign Pontiff graciously assented *juxta petita*, according to the petition, on the 26th January, 1773.

This faculty, which was at first granted to the Most Rev. Father-General, to the Provincials and higher superiors, and to the Guardians of the Franciscan Order, was afterwards extended by Pius IX.\* to the superiors of the convents of the Franciscans that are not Guardians, and also to the Vicars in the absence of the Guardians.

Not all these can delegate the faculty of blessing crucifixes with the indulgences of the Stations, but only the Father-General, who, by Apostolic power, can delegate that faculty to those inside as well as to those outside the Franciscan Order.

For the effect of gaining the indulgences, simple crosses cannot be blessed, that is, crosses without the image of our Blessed Redeemer; nor is it sufficient to have the image painted or impressed on the crosses, but they must have the images raised on

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\* Brief, 11th August, 1863.



them, inasmuch as the documents granting the indulgences expressly mention crucifixes, which are not comprehended in simple crosses without the images.

These crucifixes should not be too small, as it is said that Pius IX. often refused to bless crucifixes with this indulgence when they were only about an inch or so in length (*dimidii vel unius pollicis in longitudinem*). By a declaration of the 11th April, 1840, the indulgences are annexed to the images, so that they can be transferred from one cross to another. It is also said that these crucifixes should be of brass, but, according to a declaration of the 8th of August, 1859, this word is only used to exclude all fragile material, such as glass, plaster-of-Paris. (At present there is nothing to prevent one from having indulgences applied to the crucifix, sometimes substituted for the Stations of the Cross, if it chance to be made of ivory, bone, wood, and with much greater reason if of gold, silver, &c. In fact, a decree of September 16th, 1859, permits it.\*). . . This is to be understood of the image, but not of the cross.

No formula of blessing is required in annexing the indulgences to the crucifix, nor even holy water, but simply the sign of the cross made over them by the priest who has the faculty and the intention of attaching to the crucifixes the indulgences of the Stations of the Cross.

They need not be blessed singly, but it will do to bless them *in globo* before they are distributed. The person who first accepts the crucifix for use is the person who may gain the indulgence. Other indulgences, such, for example, as that of the hour of death, may be attached to the same crucifix, and one blessing will suffice to attach all the indulgences, provided the priest has the intention of applying them. That one may gain the indulgences of the Stations attached to the crucifix, besides the state of grace and the intention of gaining the indulgences, three other conditions are required :—

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\* Maurel—Note, page 154.

First—That through sickness or some other lawful impediment one is prevented from visiting the church or holy place where the Stations are erected. A serious inconvenience may be taken here for a lawful impediment, or any reasonable cause which prevents one from visiting the places where the Stations are erected.

The second condition is to say devoutly, and with a contrite heart, twenty *Paters*, *Aves* and *Glorias*, that is, one for each Station; five in honour or memory of our Lord's Five Sacred Wounds, and one for the intention of His Holiness the Pope. We have to adhere to this form of saying the prescribed prayers, as declared by a decree of August 8th, 1859. The case is excepted of a person so weak as not to be able to say the twenty *Paters* and *Aves*, when, according to a Brief granted by Pius IX., December 18th, 1877, it will suffice if the sick person say an Act of Contrition, with the ejaculation: *Te ergo quæsumus tuis famuli subveni; quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

Moreover, the above prayers should be recited on one and the same occasion, as explained above when speaking of the Stations, and they may be said in any tongue or language.

The third condition is, that the crucifix be held in the hand during the recital of the prayers. But by a Rescript of the Sacred Congregation, January 19th, 1884, when the prayers are said in common, it will suffice if one hold the blessed crucifix, and the others join with that person in saying the prescribed prayers.

According to the Rescript, the prayers should be said *corde saltem contrito et devote, i.e.*, with contrition of heart and devoutly. The contrition of heart refers to the disposition of the person, inasmuch as perfect contrition will enable him, if in sin, to obtain the grace of God, and thus put him in a fit state for gaining a plenary indulgence; but an Act of Contrition is not necessary for those who are in a state of grace, in order to enable them to gain the indulgences attached to the crucifix.

As to saying the prayers devoutly, the same rule may guide us as

that which is laid down for the saying of the Divine Office or other vocal prayers ; that is, the *devoutly* means saying the prayers with what is called *external* attention, or guarding against external duties that distract the mind, and are incompatible with prayer, and with *internal* attention, which means that the mind should perform the devotion as a prayer in the sense of the Church. Unless the exercise be thus performed as a prayer according to the meaning and intention of the Church, the indulgences would not be gained.

It may here be useful to call attention to two decrees which affect objects of devotion in general, and which apply in particular to crucifixes blessed with the indulgence of the Stations. These are :—

First—The decree of Alexander VII.,\* which declares that the indulgences attached to rosaries, crosses, and other pious objects, in which we may include the crucifixes of the Stations, do not pass from the person to whom these objects belong, or the person who first receives them for use ; and if these be lost, others may not be substituted for them (without blessing in the usual way), and they cannot be lent or given to another person with the intention of communicating the indulgence at the same time ; if lent in this way, these devotional objects will lose the indulgence.

The second is the decree *Nuper*,† by which the Sacred Congregation, under penalty of the loss of the indulgences, strictly prohibits objects of devotion after they are blessed to be sold, either privately or publicly, or exchanged in any way (for payment). And the Sacred Congregation being asked, whether a person who buys crosses, images, &c., in order to distribute them after they have been blessed, can ask the price of them from those to whom they are given, without fault, and without the loss of the indulgences, gave the answer *negative*—*No*.

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\* February 6th, 1657.

† June 4th, 1721.

This response of the Sacred Congregation does not appear to apply to the case in which a person by the commission of another buys crosses, &c., and undertakes to get them blessed. The buyer, in this case, is not the proprietor of the things bought, but only an agent or custodian, and there is no contract of buying and selling between him and the person for whom he acts, even though the person refunds to him the money he paid for the articles, which means making restitution to him in this case.

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## METHOD OF ERECTING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

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*A priest, having on a surplice and violet stole, and attended by at least one clerk, who shall minister the holy water and incense at the proper time, ascends the altar steps, and there makes a short discourse, explaining the excellence and utility of the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross. Afterwards, genuflecting on the lowest step, he will entone*

### THE HYMN.

1. Veni, Creator Spiritus,  
Mentes tuorum visita,  
Imple superna gratia,  
Quæ tu creasti pectora.
2. Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
Altissimi donum Dei,  
Fons vivus, ignis, charitas  
Et spiritalis unctio.

3. Tu septiformis munere,  
Digitus Paternæ dexteræ,  
Tu rite promissum Patris,  
Sermone ditans guttura.
4. Accende lumen sensibus,  
Infunde amorem cordibus,  
Infirma nostri corporis  
Virtute firmans perpeti.
5. Hostem repellas longius,  
Pacemque dones protinus ;  
Ductore sic te prævio  
Vitemus omne noxium.
6. Per te sciamus da Patrem,  
Noscamus atque Filium,  
Teque utriusque Spiritum  
Credamus omni tempore.
7. Deo Patri sit gloria,  
Ejusque soli Filio  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,  
Nunc et per omne sæculum. Amen.

*Tempore Paschali :*

Deo Patri sit gloria,  
Et Filio qui a mortuis  
Surrexit, ac Paraclito,  
In sæculorum sæcula. R. Amen.

V. Emitte Spiritum tuum, et creabuntur.

R. Et renovabis faciem terræ.

## OREMUS.

Deus, qui corda fidelium Sancti Spiritus illustratione docuisti : da nobis in eodem Spiritu recta sapere, et de ejus semper consolatione gaudere.

Defende, quæsumus Domine, beata Maria semper Virgine intercedente, populum istum (*vel* familiam istam) ab omni adversitate : et toto corde tibi prostratum (*vel* prostratam) ab hostium propitius tuere clementer insidiis.

Actiones nostras, quæsumus Domine, aspirando præveni, et adjuvando proseguere ; ut cuncta nostra oratio et operatio a Te semper incipiat, et per Te cœpta finiatur. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum. Amen.

## THE BLESSING OF THE PICTURES

*(If there be any).*

*V.* Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

*R.* Qui fecit cœlum et terram.

*V.* Dominus vobiscum.

*R.* Et cum spiritu tuo.

## OREMUS.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui sanctorum tuorum imagines sculpi aut pingi non reprobas, ut quoties illas oculis corporis intuemur, toties eorum actus et sanctitatem ad imitandum memoriæ oculis meditemur : has, quæsumus, imagines, in honorem et memoriam Unigeniti Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi adaptatas, bene ✠ dicere, et sancti ✠ ficare digneris ; et præsta, ut quicumque coram illis unigenitum Filium tuum suppliciter colere, et honorare



studuerit, illius meritis et obtentu, a Te gratiam in præsentī, et æternam gloriam obtineat in futuro. Per eundem Christum, &c. Amen.

*Then the priest asperses them with holy water, and incenses them. In a private oratory the incensation is omitted.*

## THE BLESSING OF THE CROSSES.

*(These should be of Wood.)*

*V.* Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

*R.* Qui fecit cælum et terram.

*V.* Dominus vobiscum.

*R.* Et cum spiritu tuo.

OREMUS.

Rogamus Te, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, sempiternus Deus: ut digneris bene ✠ dicere hæc signa Crucis tuæ, ut remedia salutaria generi humano; sint soliditas fidei, bonorum operum profectus, et redemptio animarum; sint solamen, et protectio, ac tutela contra sæva jacula inimicorum. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

*R.* Amen.

OREMUS.

Bene ✠ dic, Domine, has Cruces, quia per Crucem sanctam tuam eripuisti mundum a potestate dæmonum, et superasti passionem tuam suggestorum peccati, qui gaudebat in prævaricatione primi hominis per ligni vetiti sumpcionem.

*Then the priest asperses them with holy water:*

Sanctificentur ista Crucis signa in nomine Patris, et Filii,

et Spiritus Sancti: ut orantes, inclinantesque se propter Deum ante istas Cruces, inveniant sanitatem animæ, et corporis. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

R. Amen.

*Then is sung the following*

## HYMN.

Vexilla Regis prodeunt,  
Fulget crucis mysterium,  
Qua vita mortem pertulit,  
Et morte vitam protulit.

Quæ vulnerata lanceæ  
Mucrone diro, criminum  
Ut nos lavaret sordibus,  
Manavit unda, et sanguine.

Impleta sunt, quæ concinit  
David fideli carmine,  
Dicendo nationibus:  
Regnavit a ligno Deus.

Arbor decora et fulgida,  
Ornata regis purpura,  
Electo digna stipite  
Tam sancta membra tangere.

Beata, cujus brachiis  
Pretium pependit sæculi,  
Statera facta corporis,  
Tulitque prædam tartari.

O Crux, ave, spes unica,  
 Hoc Passionis tempore,\*  
 Piis adauge gratiam,  
 Reisque dele crimina.

Te, fons salutis, Trinitas,  
 Collaudet omnis spiritus :  
 Quibus Crucis victoriam  
 Largiris, adde premium. Amen.

## HYMN.

1. Stabat Mater dolorosa  
 Juxta Crucem lacrymosa,  
 Dum pendebat Filius.
2. Cujus animam gementem,  
 Contristatum, et dolentem,  
 Pertransivit gladius.
3. O quam tristis et afflicta  
 Fuit illa benedicta  
 Mater Unigeniti !
4. Quæ mœrebat, et dolebat,  
 Pia Mater, dum videbat  
 Nati pœnas inclyti.
5. Quis est homo, qui non fleret,  
 Matrem Christi si videret  
 In tanto supplicio ?

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\* *In place of the verse Hoc Passionis tempore, which is said in Passion time, in Paschal time, Paschale quæ fers gaudium is said; and at other times, In hac triumphi gloria.*

6. Quis non posset contristari,  
Christi Matrem contemplari  
Dolentem cum Filio?
7. Pro peccatis suæ gentis  
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,  
Et flagellis subditum.
8. Vidit suum dulcem Natum  
Moriendo desolatum,  
Dum emisit spiritum.
9. Eia Mater fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.
10. Fac ut ardeat cor meum  
In amando Christum Deum,  
Ut sibi complaceam.\*
11. Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas  
Cordi meo valide.
12. Tui Nati vulnerati,  
Tam dignati pro me pati,  
Pœnas mecum divide.
13. Fac me tecum pie flere,  
Crucifixo condolere,  
Donec ego vixero.

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\* Only to the end of this verse is sung at the ceremony.

14. Juxta Crucem tecum stare,  
Et me tibi sociare  
In planctu desidero.
15. Virgo virginum præclara,  
Mihi jam non sis amara,  
Fac me tecum plangere.
16. Fac ut portem Christi mortem,  
Passionis fac consortem,  
Et plagas recolare.
17. Fac me plagis vulnerari,  
Fac me Cruce inebriari,  
Et cruore Filii.
18. Flammis ne urar succensus  
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus  
In die judicii.
19. Christe, cum sit hinc exire,  
Da per Matrem me venire  
Ad palmam victoriæ.
20. Quando corpus morietur,  
Fac ut animæ donetur  
Paradisi gloria. Amen.

*The priest, going to the place of the first Station, kisses the cross and the picture, and puts them up either by himself or by another, even a lay person, in the place prepared for them ;*

*then he reads the meditation and the prayers proper to the Station, which is observed in erecting all the other Stations; which being finished, the following hymn is sung:—*

1. Te Deum laudamus : \* te Dominum confitemur.
2. Te æternum Patrem \* omnis terra veneratur.
3. Tibi omnes angeli, \* tibi cœli, et universæ potestates.
4. Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim \* incessabili voce proclamant :
5. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, \* Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
6. Pleni sunt cœli et terra, \* majestatis gloriæ tuæ.
7. Te gloriosus \* Apostolorum chorus.
8. Te Prophetarum \* laudabilis numerus.
9. Te Martyrum candidatus \* laudat exercitus.
10. Te per orbem terrarum \* sancta confitetur Ecclesia.
11. Patrem \* immensæ majestatis.
12. Venerandum tuum verum \* et unicum Filium.
13. Sanctum \* quoque Paraclitum Spiritum.
14. Tu Rex \* gloriæ, Christe.
15. Tu Patris \* sempiternus es Filius.
16. Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, \* non horruisti Virginis uterum.
17. Tu devicto mortis aculeo, \* aperuisti credentibus regna cœlorum.
18. Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes, \* in gloria Patris.
19. Judex \* crederis esse venturus.
20. Te ergo quæsumus . tuis famulis subveni, \* quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.
21. Æterna fac cum Sanctis tuis \* in gloria numerari.
22. Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, \* et benedic hæreditati tuæ.



23. Et rege eos, \* et extolle illos usque in æternum.  
 24. Per singulos dies \* benedicimus te.  
 25. Et laudamus nomen tuum in sæculum, \* et in sæculum  
 sæculi.  
 26. Dignare, Domine, die isto \* sine peccato nos custodire.  
 27. Miserere nostri, Domine, \* miserere nostri.  
 28. Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, \* quem-  
 admodum speravimus in te.  
 29. In te, Domine, speravi, \* non confundar in æternum.  
*V.* Benedictus es Domine Deus patrum nostrorum.  
*R.* Et laudabilis et gloriosus in sæcula.  
*V.* Benedicamus Patrem et Filium, cum Sancto Spiritu.  
*R.* Laudemus, et superexaltemus eum in sæcula.

## OREMUS.

Deus, cujus misericordiæ non est numerus, et bonitatis infinitus est thesaurus, piissimæ majestati tuæ pro collatis donis gratias agimus: tuam semper clementiam exorantes; ut qui petentibus postulata concedis, eosdem non deserens ad præmia futura disponas. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

*In conclusion the priest blesses the people with the cross.*



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